

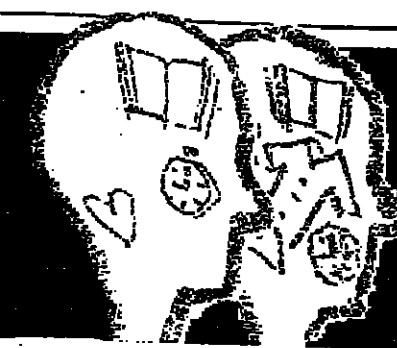


THE INDEPENDENT

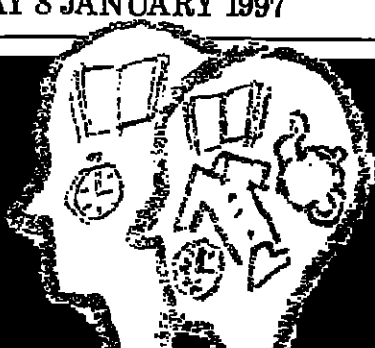
WEDNESDAY 8 JANUARY 1997

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Blair is accused of 'zero honesty' on beggars

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The election dirt started flying yesterday as John Major accused Tony Blair of "zero honesty" and hypocrisy over the Labour leader's support for action to clear the streets of beggars. Mr Blair will today hit back by drawing up Labour's battle lines with the Tories on Mr Major's alleged weak leadership, and education. The Labour leader will seek to contrast his leadership with Mr Major's lack of control over his "ungovernable" party.

The Prime Minister, in a polished 40-minute press conference, set the tone for the presidential-style election campaign which the Tories will be mounting behind him. He set out three main themes for the Tory fight-

Labour's hypocrisy beggars belief. It is a case of zero detail and zero honesty from them," he said.

The Labour leader's support for clearing the streets drew fire from groups supporting the homeless. But the Labour leadership appeared satisfied with the coverage given to Mr Blair's remarks in the *Big Issue*, underlining his message that Labour will have a hard edge to its social policies. Mr Blair's "rebuttal unit", however, denied the Prime Minister's charge of hypocrisy, insisting that Mr Blair had called for firm action against "aggressive beggars" in May 1994, but had always insisted that it should be coupled with action to tackle the causes of homelessness. The cross-fire over the issue of beggars on Britain's streets offered confirmation that the election could quickly descend into the gutter particularly after the threat by the publicist Max Clifford to dish more dirt on the Tories.

It also led to the spectacle of leading politicians lining up to say whether they gave money to beggars. Mr Blair said he did not. Mr Major said he did - millions in taxpayers' money for hostel beds. The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, said he did not give to beggars. John Prescott, the deputy leader of the Labour Party, said he did not give money to beggars. "I sometimes offer to buy them a cup of tea at King's Cross Station. I'm not sure they always want to take me up," he said.

Giving an upbeat account of the "sparkling" prospects for the economy, the choice before the British electorate would be between "smiles and tears", said Mr Major. He denied the Tory election posters - featuring a family shedding a "red tear" - amounted to negative campaigning, but Mr Prescott also carefully distanced Labour from Mr Clifford's antics.

The Prime Minister made it clear that the Tory election strategy is based on the central theme of "don't throw it all away". The Tory election manifesto is arguing that it would be better to break with tradition and give away bits of the proposals for a fifth term of office before the election is called. It is likely that much of the Tory manifesto will be "trashed" before it is officially launched.

After the press conference, Mr Major showed his readiness for the coming battle by circulating among the journalists at an informal drinks party. His performance had confirmed the belief among party leaders that he is their strongest asset.

Homeless speak out, Major's Europe pledge, David Aaronovitch, page 4
Suzanne Moore, page 12



back: the economy, Europe and opposition to Labour's plans for constitutional reform.

And in the course of the questioning, Mr Major answered one of the eight key electoral questions raised yesterday in *The Independent*. Asked whether he would propose Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, Mr Major gave a firm "no". The Prime Minister, who was last night holding talks with the Dutch prime minister Wim Kok over Britain's objections to German plans for a multi-speed Europe said there was no "remotely plausible case for leaving".

He traded blows with Mr Blair over the Labour leader's "conversion" to Mr Major's views on tackling the problem of beggars on the streets. Mr Blair's support for "zero tolerance" for petty crime, including aggressive begging, "beggared belief" he said. The Prime Minister had been attacked by Mr Blair for his "vindictiveness" when Mr Major called for similar action in 1994.

"Given what I said then and what Labour said of me, I would think



Hot copy: A *Big Issue* seller at King's Cross, central London, yesterday as Mr Major and Mr Blair traded blows over 'aggressive beggars'

Photograph: Edward Sykes

Hank Marvin's son found dead in hostel

Clare Garner

Police are investigating the sudden death of the eldest son of the guitar legend Hank Marvin who was found dead in his bed at a homeless hostel at the age of 34.

Dean Marvin, who had been estranged from his father for more than a decade after publicly challenging his "Mr Nice Guy" image, had lived in the YMCA hostel in Crouch End, north London, for the past five years.

He had few possessions - not even the guitar which he once hoped would bring him fame and fortune - and kept quiet about the fact that his father was the former Shadows guitarist. He was, however, proud of the fact that Sir Cliff Richard was his godfather although he had not seen him for more than 20 years.

In 1983, Dean told a newspaper that religious differences had caused the rift between Dean and his father, a Jehovah's Witness. He admitted to a drink problem, which later cost him his office job and left him surviving on dole handouts.

Hank Marvin later commented: "It's never ideal that a close relative should walk away from you like that, but as I've matured I've realised that just because you have a blood bond,



Happier days: The Marvin family in 1966 Photograph: Bill Orchard/Rex

it doesn't mean you will always be friends." Louis Lewis, general secretary of the YMCA hostel, described Dean as "a nice person, but at the same time a private person".

"He had lost contact with his family. The only thing he was very proud of was the fact that Cliff Richard was

his godfather." Sir Cliff Richard yesterday issued a statement via his agent which read: "It does not matter who the victim is, it is a sad indictment on society when people die in this way."

"It is more painful when the person is known to you, although I have not seen Dean since his family split in the late Sixties. My sympathy goes out to his mum and dad who I know must be devastated."

Dean Marvin was discovered lying fully clothed on top of his bed on Monday morning. The cause of his death is not known, but police said there appeared to be no suspicious circumstances. A post-mortem examination will be carried out today.

After his parents divorced in 1971, Dean lived in Mill Hill, north London, with his mother, Beryl, and twin brothers Peter and Paul, now 33, and sister Philippa, now 30. Ten years ago, Hank went to live in Australia with his second wife, Carole, and his two children from his second marriage.

Hank, who is almost into his 40th year of his musical career, is due to return to Britain in March for a tour of 42 concerts. His latest album - released in November last year - has already sold 200,000 copies.

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QUICKLY

Major stands firm
John Major said he would not use any clever dodge to rule out Britain's entry into a single currency before the general election. Page 4

Mercenaries recruited
Two former French soldiers have spent the past three months recruiting a multinational force of mercenaries to serve in Zaire. Page 8

Branson airborne
Richard Branson and two friends took off in his Virgin Global Challenger balloon in his latest attempt to circumnavigate the world. Page 3



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Queen launches PR offensive as viewers vote on monarchy

Michael Streeter

On the day that the role of the monarchy came under its most public examination, the Queen yesterday made her own modest attempt to create positive headlines for the Royal Family.

Just hours before last night's unprecedented live television debate on the institution, it was announced that the Queen will take part in a re-creation of John Cabot's voyage of discovery to Newfoundland 500 years ago.

The Queen and Prince Philip will be on board a £1.5m replica of *The Matthew*, Cabot's

flagship, when it starts to re-trace his steps on 2 May.

The Royal couple will be on board for more than a mile as the ship sails through Bristol docks with the Duke at the helm for part of the way. John Cabot is credited with taking the English language to what is now the United States. They will also be flying out to Canada for the end of the seven-week voyage on 24 June to meet the three-masted square-rigger on its arrival.

St John Hartnell, Chairman of the Matthew Project, said yesterday: "This is fantastic news. I could not believe it when the Queen accepted my invitation."

It was also announced that

the Queen is to take on the role of patron of the animal charity The Blue Cross which celebrates its 100th anniversary later this year. The previous patron was the Duchess of York before her resignation in 1992.

For the Royal Family the double announcement engendered welcome publicity just as last night's debate, called *The Monarchy: The Nation Decides*, got underway on ITV.

Up to 2 million viewers were expected to take part in a television vote on the future of the Monarchy, the biggest of its kind in British television, after a debate between experts, celebrities and members of the public

both for and against the institution. The live audience of 3,000 at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham included 3,000 people brought in from 20 cities around the United Kingdom.

Already a MORI poll commissioned by the programme has found that nearly 50 per cent of people do not expect the Monarchy to survive beyond the year 2050.

However, there was support for the Queen from last night's television anchor man, the newscaster Trevor McDonald. Speaking during rehearsals he said there was an important distinction between the Monarchy as an institution - which had served the country well - and some members of the Royal Family who had behaved "frightfully badly".

On the Monarchy he said: "She stands as a glowing example of what is possible, as a Head of State who is responsible and takes her job seriously."

He also saw no prospect of an end to the institution despite its present problems, though accepted the need for a debate.

"I do not think the case has been made out for anything else, not with any strength of feeling. It seems to me that the Monarchy will survive."

news

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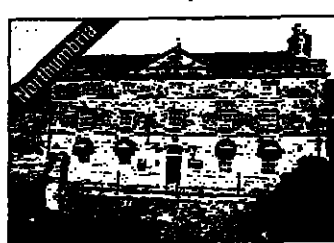
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Scots set to lose out in millennium overspend

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

A £78m project to renew the canal linking Edinburgh and Glasgow with the help of Millennium Commission cash is being put in jeopardy by threatened overspending on the Greenwich Exhibition, according to Scottish MPs.

The MPs fear that the Millennium Link plan, which needs £30m of Millennium Commission cash, is at risk. They will be seeking an early meeting with Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, when Parliament resumes next week.

The MPs point to potential overspending on the Greenwich Exhibition which has been promised £200m of Commission money but has not been able to attract matching funding from the private sector. The project's £700m budget has already been rejected by the Commission because it lacks detail.

The Millennium Link project aims to regenerate the Forth & Clyde Union canals which have been blocked off for 60 years. Its main focus will be the "Antonie Wheel", a giant revolving boat lift which will transfer boats between the two canals at Falkirk to replace 11 abandoned locks.

British Waterways, which is promoting the scheme, but not putting in any money, said it expects that 10 million visitors will be attracted to the Link each year and that it would be used by around 500 boats and yachts.

Tony Worthington, MP for Clydebank and Milngavie, said: "We don't understand why the Millennium Commission refuses to give this scheme the go-ahead when all the matching

funding is already in place." Scottish Enterprise has promised £16m and the rest will come from local authorities and businesses. A consultants' report suggested that 4,200 permanent jobs would be created and £400m of private sector investment attracted by the scheme for the 70-mile link.

The scheme, first put forward nearly two years ago, was considered by the Commission in December but no decision was taken. The Scottish MPs suspect this is because of concern that Greenwich will need more than £200m of Millennium funding.

Mr Worthington said: "We are not against the project at Greenwich, but the costs do seem to be getting out of hand, putting other projects in jeopardy. There is a fixed pot of money and if Greenwich's costs escalate, then the money has to come from somewhere."

Sam Galbraith MP who represents Strathkelvin and Bearsden, said: "This is such a valuable project that it seems amazing that the go-ahead has not been given. It has enormous potential for regenerating large swathes of Scotland as it goes through many very deprived areas. There is no possible reason why it is being delayed except for worries about money."

Mr Galbraith challenged the Commission to put out a statement guaranteeing that only £200m would be spent on Greenwich.

A spokeswoman for the Commission said last night that £1bn had been allocated for capital projects which was separate from the £200m for the Exhibition. She said: "So far, £700m out of the £1bn has been allocated."

Off with his head as knight feels cutbacks



The statue of Sir Walter Raleigh outside the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall, London, is given protection rather than dignity while tree surgeons work nearby. Photograph: Jason Bye

British newspapers lead the world on recycling

Clare Garner

Britain's newspaper industry is leading the world after reaching its target of using at least 40 per cent recycled paper four years ahead of schedule.

All national and major regional newspapers have been awarded the green stamp of approval in a Government-backed recycling programme. From now on they will print daily the industry recycling logo with the

average recycled content of British newspapers.

Between 1990 and 1995, the proportion of waste paper in newspaper rose from 26.8 per cent to 34.5 per cent. For the first six months of last year the figure was 41.2 per cent. There are no figures available on the green credentials of individual titles.

Congratulating the newspaper industry, John Gummer, Secretary of State for the En-

vironment, said yesterday: "This is a notable achievement by a major industry in reducing the impact of its operations on the environment and contributing to more sustainable waste management practices. I particularly welcome the fact that this has been achieved by voluntary means and without Government intervention or regulation."

The environmental pressure group Friends of the Earth is

pressing for information on individual titles to be made public so that the consumer has a choice, but Mr Gummer warned against "weezy words" such as those found on the back of many so-called environmentally friendly Christmas cards.

Dr Georgina Green, a Friends of the Earth forest campaigner, was not satisfied with the 40 per cent target. The organisation believes the figure should be nearer 80 per cent.

significant shorts

Go-ahead for racing's rival lottery

A new lottery game already being televised in bookmakers has been given the all clear, it was announced yesterday. The legality of 49's had been questioned by the National Lottery operator, Camelot, which wrote to the Director of Public Prosecutions requesting clarification.

The company that operates the game, 49's Limited, said the Crown Prosecution Service told it on Monday that the game was lawful and was not open to challenge as an illegal lottery.

The CPS, according to 49's Limited, said the game, which offers fixed odds on bets on choosing five balls selected randomly from 49, did not have the characteristics of a lottery in law.

Rugby star cleared

The rugby league international Steve McCurrie was cleared yesterday of inflicting grievous bodily harm on a three-month-old baby girl.

The prosecution at Warrington Crown Court had alleged that the Great Britain star and former Widnes skipper shook the baby violently to try to stop her crying while her mother was at work.

The baby stopped breathing and had to be revived by an off-duty police officer. She subsequently stopped breathing on seven further occasions during a 10-minute ambulance journey to hospital. She suffered bleeding behind both eyes and a brain haemorrhage - injuries which doctors claimed must have been caused by violent shaking.

McCurrie, 23, of Bedford, but formerly of Widnes, had denied the offence.

The player, who is in the Bedford rugby union side, admitted shaking the baby to try to stop her crying but said he had only done so gently. As he left the dock, McCurrie was embraced by his wife, Sarah.

Children pocket big pay rise

Children received a pocket money "pay rise" of 17 per cent last year, more than six times the rate of inflation and more than four times the average increase in pay.

The increase, taking the average to £2.40, is the highest since the early 1980s, said Cadbury's and Trebor Bassett in an annual review of the confectionery market.

London needs thousands more school places

A dramatic increase in school places, equivalent to at least 16 new secondary schools, will have to be provided in London within seven years to cope with a growing pupil population, according to an official study.

The report, produced by the Government's Funding Agency for Schools, will forecast a shortfall of up to 22,500 secondary places in the capital by 2003 if no expansion takes place. The Independent has learned. Meeting demand will cost between £61m and £146m, depending on how much leeway is left to accommodate parents' school preferences.

The study provides new evidence that parental choice, the corner-stone of government education policy, is in danger of collapse.

The bleak picture for the capital was underlined by figures released yesterday by Labour showing nearly one third of all appeals by parents denied the school of their choice were in London. Lucy Ward

Two quizzed on IRA blast

The RUC was last night questioning two men over the IRA rocket attack on the Belfast in the centre of Belfast on Monday.

They were arrested in the city earlier yesterday by detectives hunting the two-man gang which launched the attack from a passing car.

The Army and police across the whole of Northern Ireland were on alert against further IRA attacks and amid continuing fears of loyalist retaliation, despite assurances from political representatives on both sides that their cease-fire was holding.

Family hurt as home explodes

A massive explosion in which a mother and son were critically injured and their home wrecked was being investigated last night by gas safety experts.

Neighbours and firefighters formed a human chain to move rubble trapping Maria Breen and her five-year-old son Iwan.

Another son Colin, seven, was taken to hospital and a man believed to be Mrs Breen's boyfriend was also treated for minor injuries.

The Sam blast in New Tredegar, Gwent, south Wales, severely damaged two neighbouring properties and shattered shop and house windows up to 80 yards away.

Oasis star escapes with caution over cocaine

The rock star Liam Gallagher escaped with a police caution yesterday for possessing cocaine.

Gallagher, 24, singer with the best-selling group Oasis, was arrested two months ago in the West End of London and given police bail.

The decision at Marylebone police station means that the star will be allowed to tour the United States with the band. In a statement afterwards, his

lawyer, Anthony Burton, said: "The police have considered it appropriate to caution Mr Liam Gallagher for possession of a controlled drug when he surrendered to bail... at Marylebone Police Station. Mr Gallagher will not be prosecuted."

Gallagher was held by police in Oxford Street at seven in the morning after a night of drinking and celebrating Oasis's success at the Q magazine awards.

The arrest followed an argument with his film actress girlfriend Patsy Kensit.

Ms Kensit was shown photographs of Gallagher with another woman and then confronted her boyfriend with them.

It is alleged that Gallagher then embarked on an all-night drinking session with friends and was arrested by police who thought he was a vagrant.

Gallagher refused to make any comment last night but has openly admitted spending up to £300 a day on the drug.

However, the caution was attacked last night by Paul Bettis the father of Leah, the Essex teenager who died after taking ecstasy. Mr Bettis, 50, said if he had the power he would not hesitate to send Gallagher to prison if he offends again.

He said: "I'd be quite happy to put him inside. He has been given a second chance and if he

is caught again he must not get another caution."

Mr Bettis believes Liam has refused to apologise because it will ruin the band's "bad boy" reputation.

He said: "Oasis are a fantastic band, my daughter loved them. But young people look up to them as role models."

"If they see people like him get away with it they think 'what's stopping me doing the same?'"



Gallagher: Warning will allow him to join US tour

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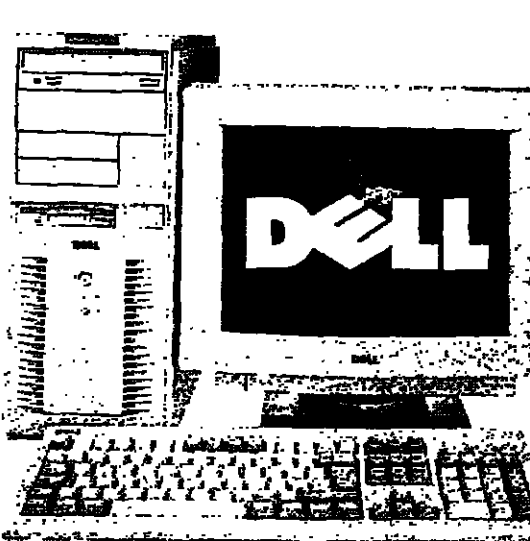


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صوتنا من الداخل

Mad dogs and Englishmen

Branson lifts-off amid the tears

Charles Arthur
Marrakesh

In the end there was no ceremony. At 11.19am the explosive bolts tethering the Virgin Global Challenger balloon to its concrete launchpad were activated. Silently the canopy, looking like a giant garlic bulb, moved up and south, towards the snow-capped Atlas mountains and the sun.

Richard Branson hopes it is the start of three weeks which will see him and two friends break what he calls "the last great aviation record", by crossing the world non-stop in a balloon. But he knows it could be the last time his family ever sees him: a fatal crash-landing is entirely possible. For that and other reasons, the five hours before the Moroccan launch were unusually emotional.

Even before dawn, there had been tears. Rory McCarthy, who had hoped he could shake off acute bronchitis to go on the global trip with Mr Branson, 46, and Per Lindstrand, the balloon's 47-year-old designer, was told at 5am by Mr Branson and his doctor that the risk was too great: if he flew, the cold, depressurised air in the capsule would turn his illness to pneumonia in 48 hours. "Ultimately it was my decision," said Dr Tim Evans. "I know daggers are drawn, but I know that I'm right."

Mr McCarthy was inconsolable, although he put on a brave face for the cameras. He has trained hard and invested £300,000 in the project. "When you've put so much of your life into something... I just can't describe how I feel," he said at the airfield, as the sun rose at 7.45 and the preparations went on without him. "I'm sure the decision was right but

that hasn't stopped me begging Richard to take me. A lot of tears were shed."

The third place went to Alex Ritchie, of Manningtree in Essex, at 52 the oldest member of the team. He was chief engineer on Mr Branson's Atlantic and Pacific balloon crossings.

Mr Branson arrived at the airfield at 8.30 to be greeted by Moroccan tribal dancers, ululating women, and traditionally dressed horsemen. Was he nervous? "Not as nervous as perhaps I should be," he said, clapping his hands (as he does when nervous). "I know the danger, having been through the Atlantic and Pacific crossings so I hope the risks are less. But we're doing 8,000 miles over land initially, so if there are any serious glitches, hopefully we can sort them out before the Pacific."

After nearly dying in a ballooning adventure in 1987 he promised his family that he would not do anything dangerous again. Conditions were perfect for a take-off. The trio posed for pictures and promised to be up and away within an hour, but the last minute checks went on for some time.

The final indication that it would go ahead came at 10.35. Mr Branson said goodbye to his parents at the spectators' barrier (intended to keep us safe if the propane tanks around the capsule exploded). Back at the capsule, he embraced his son Sam, 11, his wife Joan and daughter Holly, and finally got in.

At 11.10 the stays tethering the balloon were taken off. Then came that crack. Two hours later, the balloon was just a speck against the cloudless, hazy sky. A great adventure, indeed.

Leading article, page 11

Pressures of life in the jet stream

The crew aim to take the balloon up into the jet stream, a tube of air at 9,000 metres flowing from west to east at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour, writes Charles Arthur.

If it runs favourably, it should carry the unpowered balloon along at an average of 50mph. But it is possible to forecast the jet stream's patterns only five days ahead: if it breaks up in the next week, the voyage may become impossible. If necessary, the crew can parachute out. Their finishing point will depend heavily on local prevailing winds.

The challenge of the task does not rest solely with the weather. Life inside the capsule of the Virgin Global Challenger will be cramped, smelly and disorientating. The three men have only 23 cubic metres in which to sleep, eat and use the toilet. There are no washing facilities: the tonne of water they are carrying is intended solely for drinking, because they will dehydrate rapidly in the pressurised air they will be breathing. This will be equivalent to living at an altitude of 2,500m. In order to avoid kidney damage, each

man will have to drink about five litres of water per day.

Their meals will consist of "wet microwave" dehydrated foods, complemented with fresh fruit and vegetables, amino acid tablets, and various daily "treats" - including a miniature of vodka, caviar and chocolate.

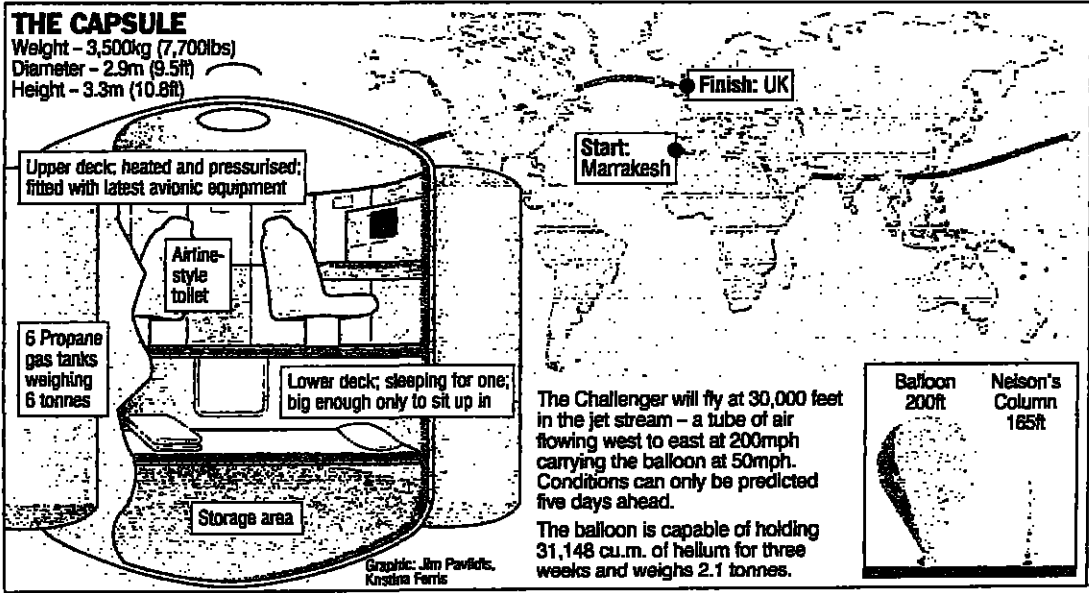
There is no room to stretch the legs. The crew risk atrophy and might be unable to walk after 18 days. There will also be problems of sleep and orientation. There will always be one man taking eight hours rest in the sleeping compartment under the floorboards while the other two work at the controls.

As they cross time zones, the trio will find it hard to avoid some sort of jet lag, because of the body's natural tendency in isolation to run on a 25-hour day.

The men will have a plentiful supply of human contact though, with a "chase plane" following their progress around the world, and radio links and satellite telephones allowing them to talk to family and friends at any time.



Upwardly mobile: A Moroccan musician heralds Virgin Global Challenger's takeoff Photograph: David Rose



Frigate races to capsized sailor

Ian Burrell and
Stuart Alexander

Rescuers searching for the British yachtsman Tony Bullimore last night admitted they were unlikely to know if he was alive until a frigate reaches his capsized boat tomorrow. Mr Bullimore, 57, is believed to be still on board his yacht, *Exide Challenger*, which capsized on Sunday 1,500 miles south-west of Perth, Western Australia.

Thierry Dubois, a fellow competitor in the Vendée Globe round-the-world race, who also capsized, was last night described as "exceptionally well". He has a radio and is in a liferaft. Rescuers hope he can help guide them to Mr Bullimore.

Rick Burleigh, manager of search-and-rescue operations at the Maritime Rescue Centre in Canberra, said: "We are trying to ascertain whether he can throw any light on Tony, because when this incident started they were reasonably close together. They may have been talking together and that could assist in establishing whether Tony is battered down inside his boat or not."

Hopes for Mr Bullimore's safety were dented by the news that he had not sent a second distress signal, as was thought yesterday. Nevertheless, rescuers were confident the former Royal Marine from Bristol was pinned in the yacht's hull or had clambered into his liferaft.

As the operation continued, some Australians asked why they were being requested to pay millions of pounds to help international yachtsmen. Under the Law of the Sea Convention, Australia has to rescue people in trouble within 1,500 miles of its coast. The rescue of Raphael Dincelli, another Frenchman who

capsized in the same race on 27 December, cost £77,000. The operation to save Mr Dubois and Mr Bullimore is costing that much each day for the main Orion search aircraft alone, excluding the wages of the crew. Tens of thousands more is being spent on the frigate *Adelaide*, 30 of whose crew were recalled from holiday to take part in the operation.

A tanker, the *Sanko Phoenix*, has been diverted to the scene and should arrive later tomorrow and a back-up ship, the *Hizdrili*, is to leave Perth this morning. Four aircraft are involved but because of the seven-hour flight to the site, they can stay over the area for only three and a half hours before returning.

Last night Bronwyn Bishop, Australia's acting defence minister, said: "I can understand that taxpayers are concerned... But I know that Australians are very concerned that we find these two people alive."

Race organisers were also criticised for failing to change the route after a yachtswoman got lost in the same area two years ago, prompting a £1m rescue operation.

David Gray, of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, said: "We would prefer that yachts didn't go further than 45 degrees south. It's getting beyond their capabilities."

Today the yachtsmen still face a five-metre swell in freezing seas but the wind yesterday eased to 25 knots from 45-50 knots.

In Bristol, as the search entered its third day, Mr Bullimore's family prayed for good news. His sister Bunmy, a Parcel Force manager from Bristol, said: "We've just got to keep hoping. But until someone actually sees Tony or manages to get in touch with him on the radio, we've got to keep on waiting."

Surviving in the washing machine

If Tony Bullimore is still on board the *Exide Challenger*, it will be akin to living in a washing-machine, write Ian Burrell and Stuart Alexander.

He will be in pitch darkness, perched on boxes of food, with three feet of water at his feet as the yacht pitches in heavy seas. Above the water level in the compartment, which measures nine feet by 10, will be an air pocket of about four feet to the ceiling, once the floor of the lower cabin on the now overturned boat.

"So much depends on whether he is getting air coming in through the door," said a member of Mr Bullimore's back-up team in Bristol yesterday. "And that depends on the height of the flooding, because everything is moving all the time."

Mr Bullimore's plight reopened the debate on whether it is best to remain on an upturned yacht or climb aboard a liferaft, like Thierry Dubois, the French competitor who capsized in the same storm.

Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, who sailed round the world in the 32ft *Suhaili*, said: "The wind-chill factor is horrendous, so if he goes on the

top of the hull he would freeze even if he wasn't swept off by a wave. Down there he is out of the wind and may even be able to get dry. His food is down there with him, including his emergency rations, which would include water. As long as he has air and is not too cold, he could last a long time... He is a tough little bugger but must now just wait another long 36 hours. We are all doing the same with everything crossed."

The inquiry into the 1979 Fastnet race, when 24 yachts were abandoned, found seven people died after boarding liferafts. Most of the yachts were recovered, suggesting it may have been safer to stay on board. James Stevens, national coach of the Royal Yachting Association, said: "There is a great temptation to get out when the boat is rolling, with things crashing around your head. But you are usually safer in the boat if it's still afloat. A yacht is a better liferaft than an inflatable."

In the yacht, however, there is a greater risk from lack of air or being trapped by changing water levels or moving debris.

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news

Tory election campaign reveals art of aggressive begging

The snow flakes were swirling around me and a bitter wind was lifting the flaps of my Nicole Farhi overcoat. So I quickly stepped over the freezing beggar (pausing briefly to give him a photocopy of Tony Blair's interview in the *Big Issue*) and into the festive warmth of a crowded Conservative Central Office.

We were all there – the big cheese political editors with their pompous voices, the spiky columnists with their sceptical expressions, the young BBC tyros with their "gosh, isn't this



fascinating" fidgety body-language, the photographers and camera operators shuffling around the aisles on their knees like modern Toulouse-Lautrecs, the Tory spin-doctors beady watching us watching them, a triplet of Central Office Samantha discussing sex and politics, and the Prime Minister – we were all there to... Well, what were we there for?

We were there because, in the words of the old First World War song, we were there. My fantasy, that Mr Major had

commanded this large and paunchy assembly into existence for the purpose of announcing a snap election, was soon disabused.

This was, they told us, the first of regular series of such press conferences which would be held "before, during and after the next election" so there could be no misunderstanding between PM and press corps on the vital matters of state. This was, of course, complete balls. Mr Major has had the best part of six-and-a-half years to dis-

cover this unique American presidential method of addressing the nation via its journalistic establishment. That he has done so within weeks of a general election suggests a more brute imperative than a sudden desire to be properly understood. It is because (goes the theory) the more we see of good of John and the less of Howard, Bottomley et al, the more likely we are to say, "you know, it isn't so bad after all".

And the great thing about Mr Major is that he is promising

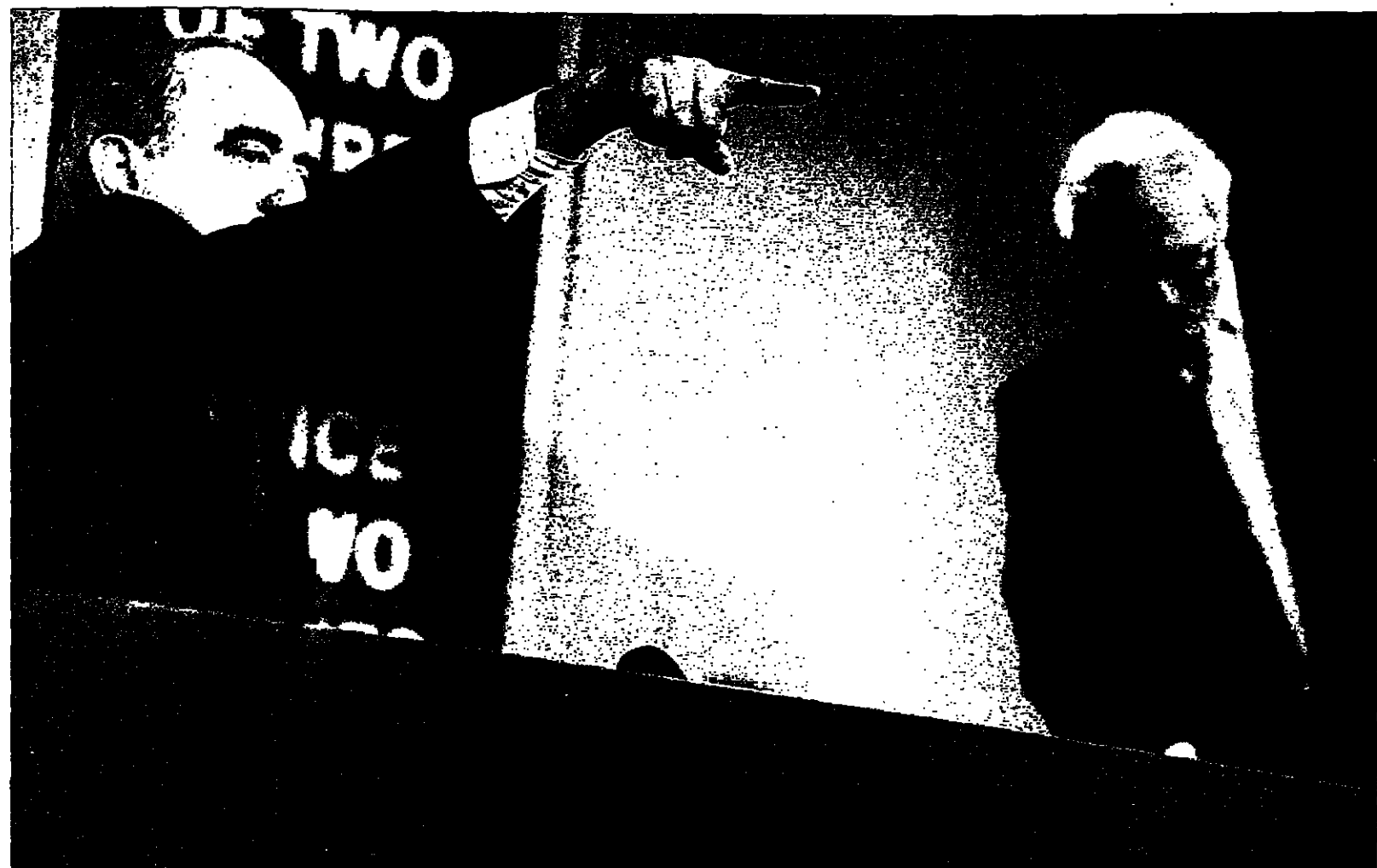
nothing. I don't mean that he isn't promising anything. I mean that nothing is what he is promising. Take the hereditary peers in the House of Lords, permitted to cast their votes in the second chamber of parliament by virtue of their ancestors having lent their mistresses to Charles II – "if it ain't broke, don't fix it", said Mr Major. The principle of hereditary entitlement was "no more odious than appointment *en masse* by the Prime Minister". Does this mean that a Tory fifth term will

see quango appointments made inheritable, as in Czarist Russia? Anyway, said the PM, most people preferred the Lords to the Commons, which he was in favour of reforming – by starting the new term in the spring, rather than in the autumn (even if it is broke – don't fix it).

This was so underwhelming that I began to toy with ideas for fanfares to accompany this presidential exercise. I had got as far as *Hail to the Chief*, followed by the *Snot-Spangled Banner*, when a subject lurched on to Mr

Blair's views on beggars. Aggressive begging was indeed a problem, the PM was declaring, hadn't he said so first?

I looked around: there were red tear posters around the hall, and red tear handouts in the arms of the Samantha's, all carrying one simple message: give us yer vote or the Reds will steal yer dosh, rape yer granny and break up yer country. Yes indeed, Mr Major knows all about aggressive begging. In fact, he's basing an entire election campaign on it.



Points of view: John Major and Brian Mawhinney (left) at the Prime Minister's US-style press conference yesterday Photograph: Jason Bye

Labour backs away from Clifford scandals

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Labour sought to distance itself from Max Clifford yesterday as the subject of the latest scandal handled by the publicist served a writ on the newspaper that carried the story.

Solicitors for Jerry Hayes, the

Conservative MP for Harlow who was accused of a gay relationship with 18-year-old Paul Stone, said they were taking action against the *News of the World*. The move came hours after Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, backed away from his earlier claims that the stories were the inevitable re-

sults of the Tories' new push for family values.

At a press conference yesterday Mr Prescott said the party did not approve of the sort of "threats of scandals" promised by Mr Clifford, who is acting for Mr Stone. Mr Clifford has said he will deliver two or more such stories before the

election in an attempt to destroy the government.

Mr Prescott added that Labour had never sought to exploit sexual scandals of this sort, and had not done so when the Conservatives' "Back to Basics" campaign flushed out a number of revelations about their MPs.

"We didn't exploit that and

we have no intention of doing so now. We will just get on with putting Labour's alternative policies," he said at a press conference to launch the opposition party's poster campaign. Mr Prescott unveiled a picture of John Major and the slogan: "Why trust him on the election after 22 tax rises?"

The Tories' own launch on Monday was overshadowed by Mr Hayes' troubles and by a backbencher's decision to work with opposition parties on constitutional reform.

Major makes pledge to stay in Europe

Colin Brown and Sarah Helm

Tory Euro-sceptics' hopes of a change of policy on Europe before the election were dealt a blow yesterday when John Major said he would not use any "clever dodge" to rule out Britain's entry into a single currency before polling day.

He also gave an unequivocal commitment to staying in Europe. He said: "Of course we must stay in the European Union. No 'sensible' person believed otherwise, he insisted.

"Staying in the EU isn't in doubt. What we do have to determine is the nature of the EU in which we remain members and our position within it."

His remarks, which answer one of the eight key electoral questions posed by *The Independent* yesterday, dismayed Tory Euro-sceptics whose hopes had been raised last week by Stephen Dorrell, the first Cabinet minister to call for a renegotiation of Britain's relationship with Europe.

The Prime Minister said he would not use the Maastricht criteria for convergence between the economies before entry into the single currency as a "clever dodge" for refusing to join it.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, is due to return to the Cabinet within the next three or four weeks with a paper exploring the basis on which the Government will judge the economic

THE INDY EIGHT			
Q What will happen to taxes under Blair or Major?	Q Will the parties spend more on schools – and who loses?	Q Would Ashdown keep Blair in power without PM?	Q Can Labour match the Tory pledge on NHS cash?
Q If things go badly, would a yes take us out of Europe?	Q Will Blair back voting reform if he wins?	Q Would Labour take Britain into a single currency?	Q What do the parties mean by radical reform of welfare?

criteria "at the right time", the Prime Minister told the opening Tory election campaign press conference in London.

"I am not looking for technicalities to dodge around and change the policy," he said. "I am not looking for some clever dodge to change the policy."

"This is a decision of immense importance which is going to affect us, whether we enter the single currency or not."

One Euro-sceptic said: "This means there will be no change of policy before the general election."

The Euro-sceptics in the Cabinet, led by Michael Howard, Home Secretary, are expected to use the next Cabinet clash with Mr Clarke to mount a last-ditch demand for Britain's entry into the single currency in the first wave to be ruled out.

Some ministers said last night that there was still a chink of light left open by Mr Major to

allow ministers to say in the run-up to the election that it was "unlikely" Britain would enter in the first wave.

That is unlikely to satisfy many Euro-sceptics who have already had their election addresses printed with commitments to vote against any move to enter a single currency.

Mr Major last night met Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, to discuss Britain's anxieties about the drive towards a single currency by Germany and France. Mr Major underlined British opposition to the use of the institutions to back up a stability group, which excluded some member states.

Mr Kok warned him that Europe will not allow Britain to hold up further integration in the run-up to the election.

He also attempted to discuss with Mr Major whether there were any areas of reform where Britain might be prepared to make concessions ahead of the election.

Homeless refuse to clear off the streets for Blair

David Garfinkel

Standing in freezing temperatures at King's Cross in north London yesterday, the homeless sent Tony Blair a clear and disapproving message: "You will never stop us begging."

The area, notorious for drug pushing and prostitution, has been targeted by police in recent weeks in an American-style crackdown on vagrants.

Although the operation is upheld as a success by local residents, beggars were angered by comments made by the Labour leader in the *Big Issue*, a magazine sold by the homeless, that they should be removed from the streets.

The controversial policy known as zero tolerance, in which people arrested for petty crimes like graffiti, is strongly supported by Mr Blair.

The man obviously does not know how hard it is to survive out there," said Shaun.

Beggars say zero tolerance regime pushes problem to another area

"Blair should be hung up for what he said. He has had an easy life – never going hungry or having to beg for enough money to get a scrap of food."

The 43-year-old, who has lived rough for 12 years, said it would be almost impossible to find a place for all of the people who are living on the streets.

Melvin Wharton, 55, and Jimmie Simms, 20, both agreed that putting the homeless out of sight and mind could have dangerous repercussions.

"If we could find another way we would, but it is the only way we know how to survive. I do not think Blair would manage on the streets for more than a day," said Mr Wharton.

Mr Simms believed the threat

of arrest under the scheme just pushed the more desperate people into other areas.

But the chair of the King's Cross residents' action group, Harvey Bass, said that the police initiative targeted only those who committed aggravated begging, and therefore did not effect genuine homeless people.

"The streets are slightly safer now that a certain anti-social element has been removed. These people were causing a lot of problems for locals who were being mugged and threatened."

Mr Bass said that much of the blame rested with the Tory government which has done nothing to solve the homeless crisis.

Alex Hall, who sells the *Big Issue* at King's Cross, is not confident that Mr Blair has the right answer either.

"The country has got itself into a state money wise, and cannot see where Blair will get the cash from to get all the homeless people off the streets."

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Water fat cats deny gourmet jibes

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Water "fat cats" who have been accused of feasting too heavily on the proceeds of their newly privatised companies have delighted their detractors by sponsoring a series of good-food guides.

Labour could barely conceal its mirth last night as it revealed that the Water Services Association, the trade body for the water companies, has backed the four latest offerings from Egon Ronay. The association is the main sponsor of *Bars, Bistros and Cafes*, published last month by Britain's foremost food critic. It is also a subsidiary sponsor of *Oriental Restaurants*, *Just a Bite* and the *Hotel and Restaurants Guide*.

As the association insisted that the initiative was part of a scheme aimed at encouraging restaurants to serve tap water, Labour's employment spokes-

man Ian McCartney condemned the move. "Instead of splashing out on guides to dining out the water companies should be concentrating on improving job security for their staff and services to consumers. They have made the leap from the board room to the dining room," he said.

Between 1989, when the companies were privatised, and 1995 their directors had an average 363 per cent pay rise, Labour said. During the same period, the number of staff dealing with water fell from almost 48,000 to 37,500.

A Water Services Association spokeswoman denied that the sponsorship indicated gourmet tendencies among its members. It was part of a campaign to persuade restaurants to offer customers a jug of tap water rather than expensive bottled water, she said, adding that they were offering a customer care award to considerate establishments.

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Jazzmen sound blue note at Scott's farewell

Louise Jury

The sound of jazz filled the crematorium as friends and family gathered to say goodbye to the great musician and club owner Ronnie Scott yesterday.

The musicians Johnny Dankworth and his wife Cleo Laine, Benny Green and Sonny Rollins, the actor Spike Milligan and the humourist Denis Norden were among those who packed the service in Golders Green, north London.

A giant white and yellow rose wreath in the shape of a saxophone marked the head of the funeral cortege which found it almost impossible to get through the crowds. Around 100 mourners listened to the service by loudspeaker in the bitter cold outside.

The legendary club owner, died suddenly aged 69 two weeks ago. His body was found at his home in Chelsea, west London, last month.

But although shocked and saddened by his unexpected death, friends yesterday laughed as they remembered his sense of humour and paid tribute to the Soho club which became one of the most famous in the world.

Benny Green, a friend for 45 years, said Ronnie's death had left an "enormous hole", and recounted one of Scott's

quips. Laid flat on his back by a slipped disc at another friend's funeral, Mr Green was taken to the graveside across the back seat of a car. "It's hardly worth going home," Ronnie had said.

More emotionally, Mr Green said Ronnie was "the most fascinating man I ever befriended... a virtuoso musician, very funny, well-read, gentle, compassionate".

Sonny Rollins, one of the artists Ronnie Scott was most proud to have presented, described him as "the great saint of jazz". And Johnny Dankworth during an ad lib echo of the jazz tradition of improvisation, reminisced about when he and Ronnie lasted nine months together in a band on the *Queen Mary* before being sacked for playing practical jokes.

There was, as yet, none among the up-and-coming young jazz musicians of today to match Scott for his great character, Mr Dankworth said. He was applauded when he wished Peter King, Scott's business partner, all the best in keeping the club going.

Prayers were asked for his surviving relatives, before the mourners left for the pilgrimage back to central London, many clutching musical instruments. Ronnie Scott's club was remaining closed last night for the wake.



Tribute to 'jazz saint': The hearse topped by a saxophone wreath from Scott's club partner, Peter King, arriving at a north London crematorium. Photograph: Andrew Buuman

Stress warning over hiding feelings at work

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

Suppressing emotions and being nice to customers and colleagues at work can take a lot out of you, according to psychologists.

All organisations expect employees to "manage their emotions", be they office workers stifling anger towards fellow employees or undertakers exhibiting due solemnity at funerals.

Some employers such as Macdonald's and Disney have written codes of conduct which

mean staff have to spend most of their time smiling and being inordinately accommodating to the most difficult customers.

Other companies have a less formal set of unspoken rules, but nevertheless employees are expected to keep their boredom, anxiety and disappointment to themselves. The basic rule is that "extremes of emotion" should not be exhibited.

"Don't show anger and don't swing from the chandeliers with delight," says Sandi Mann, a research psychologist at the University of Salford.

All this can be very stressful and lead to absenteeism and high staff turnover, but people should keep "faking it", said Ms Mann.

Addressing the occupational psychology conference of the British Psychological Society in Blackpool yesterday, she said the need for employees to keep emotions to themselves was not necessarily damaging.

It provided considerable benefits to most organisations. "It is a very important social skill and can enhance the corporate identity of the business. What

is new is that we are finding it has a downside and can lead to stress. Unhealthy employees can mean an unhealthy organisation. We should keep on faking it, but we should look at ways of managing the stress that it creates."

Nurses often had to display appropriate emotions. "They sometimes have a laugh with colleagues at a patient's expense, not to be cruel but to relieve stress," she said.

Such "emotion management" was seen in everyday life. "When you are on the bus, don't

laugh out loud because people will think you are strange," Ms Mann said.

Her findings were based on a study of 160 people at 12 companies in Britain, from banks and building societies to a television group. Ms Mann, who conducted her research with Robert Jones of Southwest Missouri State University, found that too much suppression could result in a failure to report an organisation's shortcomings to senior management.

Where companies expected employees to exhibit a stiff up-

per lip, expression of personal feelings could be seen as a sign of weakness and add to stress.

The researchers urged management to recognise the problem and maximise the benefits of emotion management while minimising psychological costs. Companies should allow workers "downtime" when they are allowed to express their feelings.

Sometimes a "good heavy bollocking" of an employee was much more effective than a formal disciplinary procedure, a psychologist believes. However, such an informal re-

primand could only work where the person giving the telling-off has the respect of the worker.

Derek Rollinson of the University of Huddersfield said: "A bollocking does work in a number of cases, but we can't find cases where they don't. They can lead to resentment."

Dr Rollinson said there were also considerable imperfections in formal procedures. In a study of 104 employees who had gone through a disciplinary process, he said 24 per cent had changed their behaviour gladly, while a further 24 per cent would co-op-

erate grudgingly. The rest said they would probably commit the same offence again.

He urged management to use disciplinary procedures to "persuade" and "rehabilitate" employees rather than exact retribution. Many employees believed that disciplinary hearings - which often took on a quasi-legal atmosphere - had been prejudged. They also believed that rules and regulations were applied inequitably. Sometimes, they said, rules were not taken seriously by management, but existed to "show who is boss".

Women can rise above unfair pay

Women at the top of companies and at the very bottom suffer less direct discrimination over pay than their female colleagues in middle management, a study has found, writes Barrie Clement.

As soon as women break through the "glass ceiling" they tend to be judged on their merits to a greater extent, according to Tuvia Melamed of Anglia Polytechnic University.

In a study of 1,200 men and women in a wide range of jobs and industries, Dr Melamed discovered that men earned on average £20,700 and women £14,700. He found that overall 20 per cent of the difference in pay was attributable to simple prejudice. For middle managers, however, the proportion rose to 40 per cent. Among junior employees, only 2 per cent was the result of direct discrimination. For women who had broken through the "glass ceiling" and become senior managers and top executives, between 11 per cent

and 15 per cent of the difference was caused by prejudice. "If you manage to progress through to this level you are judged more on your abilities," Dr Melamed said.

Women also, however, suffered from indirect discrimination where employers sought personal qualities which were normally associated to a greater extent with men.

Addressing the conference, Dr Melamed said that from the late 1970s the relative wages of men and women in full-time jobs were on a "slowly convergent path". This process seemed to have been set in motion by the Equal Pay Act which came into force in 1976, but the move to equality was not yet finished.

Recent figures suggested that women's salaries were about 72 per cent of men's. While in 1970 women earned only 62 per cent of men's wages, today there was still a 28 per cent differential.

Heads revolt over pensions

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Headteachers yesterday announced a campaign which could bring teacher training to a standstill in protest at government proposals to cut back on early retirement.

Leaders of the National Association of Head Teachers said they were advising their members not to sign teacher training contracts after 1 September.

Ministers are proposing to cut back the number of teachers taking early retirement by changing the pension rules so that either schools or local authorities, not the Treasury, have to foot most of the bill. The aim is to reduce the costs of early retirement. Teaching unions estimate that 17,000 teachers are rushing to take early retirement before the new rules come into force in April.

David Hart, the NAHT's general secretary, said: "The consequences for schools of the Government's proposals

are potentially devastating. Older teachers wishing to retire will be forced to remain in the profession... ill-health and the cost of supply cover is likely to increase."

But Cheryl Gillan, a schools minister, said any disruption of teacher training would be irresponsible. "We do not expect premature retirement to end... there will still be plenty of scope for teachers to retire early for health reasons."

"However, only one in five teachers remains until the age of 60 and we simply do not believe that the remaining four out of five are incapable of teaching effectively until they are 60."

Two teachers who took early retirement at Christmas have been told to return to work this term amid fears their departure falls foul of the new rules. The two, both in their fifties, have been summoned back to Wright Robinson High School, in Gorton, Manchester only weeks after accepting leaving presents and farewells from pupils and staff.

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£10,000+		3.69		2.95
£2,000+		3.21		2.56
Up to £2,000		1.25		1.00
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£10,000+		3.23		2.58
£5,000+		3.23		2.58
£ 500+		2.74		2.19
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Aids sufferers living in fear of losing jobs

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

Aids and HIV sufferers who are discriminated against at work are refusing to take their employers to court because of fears of being identified and failures in the legal system, a study suggests.

There is also evidence that some lawyers are reluctant to represent people with Aids.

Early results from a study of attitudes and treatment of Aids sufferers reveals widespread discrimination that includes reports of sufferers being sacked and hounded out of their jobs because of their condition.

The problems of discrimination at work received worldwide publicity through the film *Philadelphia*, which starred Tom Hanks as a successful gay lawyer who was sacked after his boss discovered he had Aids. He then had difficulty in obtaining a lawyer to fight the case in court - which he eventually won.

The new information comes from a European Commission-funded study of how people with Aids and HIV are being treated by the legal system in England and Wales, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Norway, France and the Netherlands.

The project began in 1995 but questionnaires to Aids sufferers and legal aid lawyers are only just being sent out. In England and Wales 10,000 legal aid firms are being contacted and thousands of people with HIV or Aids. They are being asked their experiences of the legal system when dealing with cases of discrimination.

Professor Avrom Sherr of the Institute of Advance Legal Studies, a UK co-ordinator of the survey, said: "Some of the reports are heartbreaking. We have had people whose lives have been devastated because of their treatment at work and the reaction from colleagues they thought were trusted friends."

He added that early evidence shows that one of the major reasons men and women who are discriminated against fail to take legal action is the fear of being named in court. There is no right to anonymity.

Warnings given by health care professionals also appear to reinforce this concern of being stigmatised and made unemployable in future.

Potential litigants are also put off by the length of time a case can take to come to court. Professor Sherr said: "The time factor is a major issue. People feel the energy and effort needed to

fight a case is not worth it, particularly if they believe they have not long to live. They believe a legal battle will effect their mental and physical health."

He added: "Even Aids rights activists seem reluctant to go to court. The study will consider what aspects of the law and legal services are preventing more people coming forward."

There have been some reports of lawyers discriminating against people with Aids.

Professor Sherr concluded: "Very few cases of discrimination are going to the courts. There must be many that are actionable. We want to encourage more people to come forward to obtain legal services and to end discrimination against Aids and HIV sufferers."



Rock solid: The sculptor Tony Cragg with one of his large-scale works to be exhibited at three venues in London this month, including the Lisson Gallery and Art 97 - the London Contemporary Art Fair. The show will focus on 15 works never before seen in Britain, with photographs, videos and new drawings. It opens at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, east London, from 10 January until 9 March. Photograph: Emma Boam

Chemist wins fight for cheap medicine

Glenda Cooper

A chemist from South Wales has won a technical victory in his fight to dispense medicines for less than the National Health Service prescription charge.

Allan Sharpe, a pharmacist in Newbridge, Gwent, has had a fine lifted of £550 which was imposed on him in 1995 for breaching NHS rules. He has advised customers over the past 10 years to buy medicine privately when it is cheaper than the NHS prescription fee of £5.50.

Mr Sharpe was fined by the NHS-run Mid-Glamorgan Family Services Authority for being in breach of his contract. He appealed to William Hague, the Secretary of State for Wales, who decided the case against him was flawed because Gwent Family Services Authority, who referred the case to Mid-Glamorgan, had waited too long before acting on a complaint.

But a spokesman for the

Welsh Office said yesterday that Mr Sharpe was still subject to the law if he carried on dispensing prescriptions at a cheaper rate.

Yesterday Mr Sharpe said: "I am not going to stop saving my patients money. I am not prepared to play at being a tax collector for the Government. I hope this will prompt the Government and the NHS to sort out ... the prescription system."

The National Pharmaceutical Association, which represents 10,000 independent pharmacies throughout the UK, said the result of the appeal was "disappointing" as the legal position had not been clarified.

"Mr Sharpe is focusing public attention on the grossly unfair system of prescription charges and the NPA is fully in sympathy with what he has been seeking to achieve," a spokeswoman said.

"However, private dispensing is not the solution ... What is needed is a full review of the prescription charge system."

DAILY POEM

My Father's Handkerchiefs

By Susan Wicks

In a controlled explosion
of dry grief, fragile as skeletons,
reminding in my hand like my daughter's
origami monsters, their worn muslin
stuff with mucus, they let me prise them
open. With a sound like tearing
the crumbs of snot flick out at me,
my father's latest creations
dead. Each week I wash them,
press warmth into the yielding creases
and bring them back - so many
neat flat squares for him
to snort his thick grief into. Each week
I find them again, wreckage
of crippled beasts and flowers
to flutter or creep or scuttle
into my machine
as I try to name them: butterfly,
tortoise, crane, crab, lily,
cygnet, crane, crane, crane.

Today's poem from the TS Eliot Prize shortlist comes from Susan Wicks's third collection, *The Clever Daughter* (Faber). Her acclaimed memoir, *Driving My Father*, was published last year, while Faber publishes her first novel, *The Key*, later this month.

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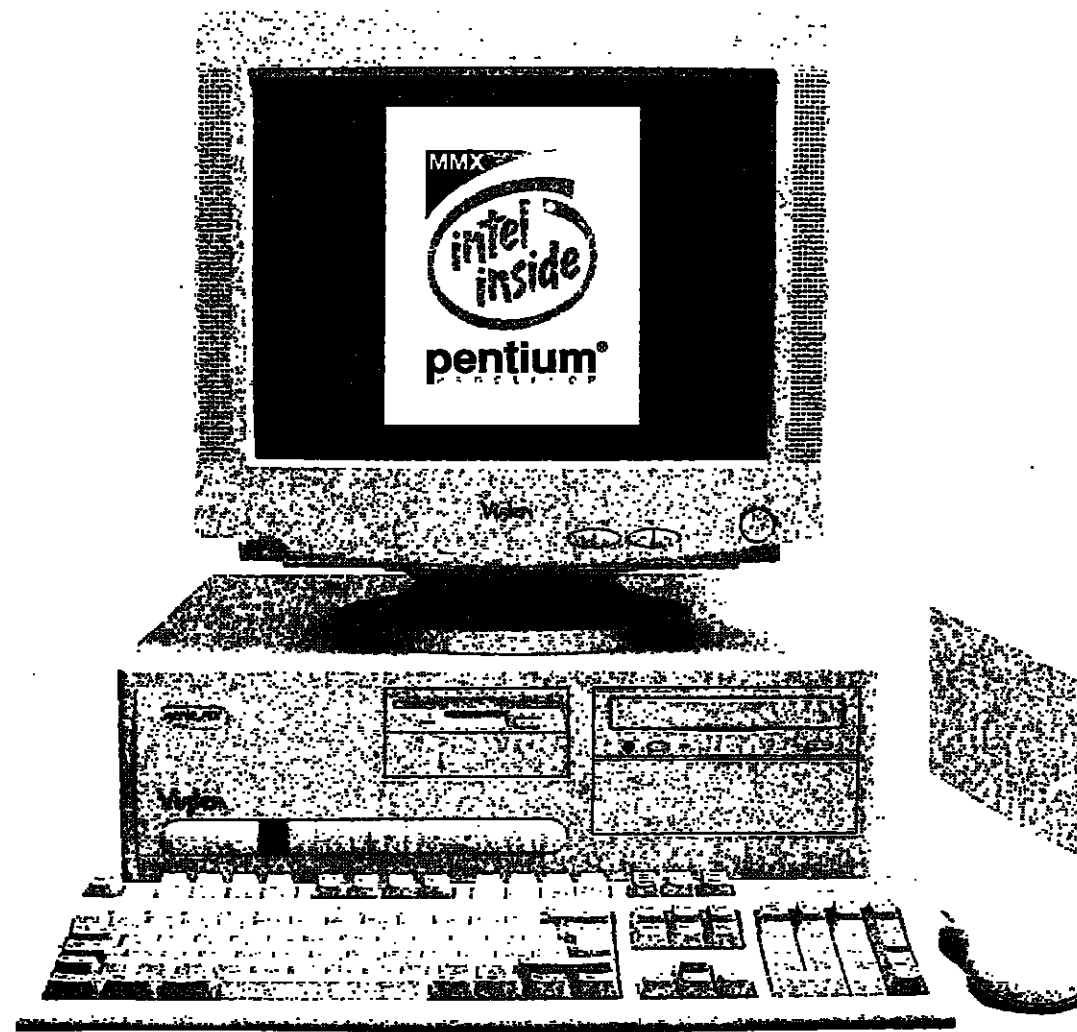


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international

Spymaster steps from shadow into courtroom limelight

Imre Karacs
Düsseldorf

The "man without a face" made a triumphant entry into the bunker, turning his cheek towards the cameras and acknowledging Markus Wolf, one-time spy-master, in the limelight with a familiarity belying his long life in the dark: in the shadowy world of espionage.

For most of the three decades that he ran East Germany's foreign intelligence service, the HVA, his Western adversaries could not even put a face to the name. Now his image fills

television screens, his punditry commands exorbitant fees, a book entitled *Secrets of Russian Cuisine* pays the bills, and the last Cold warrior is about to hit stardom with a seminal work on the Cold War.

All that stands in the way of minting fame into fortune is a little misunderstanding with the German judiciary, who keep trying to throw him into jail. And so Mr Wolf returned yesterday to the windowless Düsseldorf courtroom where he was once convicted of treason, but this time as a common criminal.

Then - he was absolved by the highest court in the land, which ruled that

East Germans who had spied on West Germany had committed no crime in their own country. Now - the prosecution is citing the East German penal code in an attempt to convict him on charges of abduction, coercion, and causing grievous bodily harm.

"My accusers have revealed no more than methods that have belonged to all secret services of all ages," Mr Wolf said, staring at his prosecutors. "Neither the constitution, nor the law of the country I served were violated." If he had ordered the kidnapping and brutalisation of innocents, then his actions had been no worse than those of the other side.

In response to the charge that he had ordered the imprisonment of a former Gestapo employee, Mr Wolf took a dig at the Western inclination to turn a blind eye: "Contrary to the West German secret services, the uncovering of former Nazi henchmen was one of the legitimate tasks of the HVA," he declared.

It was dedication to root out "Hitler-fascism" and to defend "socialism" that had driven him, he said. As if to justify his actions, Mr Wolf dwelt at length on his colourful life, his famed memory deserting him only when he was asked about the date of his third marriage.

His parents, atheist Jews who joined the Communist Party in 1928, fled Germany in 1933 after the burning of the Reichstag. Markus - or "Misha" - grew up in Moscow, and was educated at a school for German communists where teachers and pupils would often disappear in a Stalinist purge. Misha studied to be an aircraft engineer, but after the outbreak of war he was ordered to enrol in the Comintern's school for promising leaders of the future satellite states.

He returned to Germany shortly after the surrender, working as a propagandist for the Russian "liberators". Eventually, he became an East Ger-

man diplomat in Moscow and then a party apparatchik in East Berlin.

On his career between 1955 and 1986, Mr Wolf remained silent, but he appeared keen to talk about his relatively short flirtation with journalism. In 1946, he covered the Nuremberg trials, which some commentators today regard as the precedent for bringing leaders of the East German regime to justice.

"It was a deeply emotional experience, one which I will never forget," Mr Wolf said yesterday, his now famous face betraying not a hint of irony. The trial is expected to last until the end of March.



Markus Wolf: Criminal trial

Officers accused over 'white legion'

Former Mitterrand aides 'helped recruit Zaire mercenary force'

Mary Dejevsky
Paris
Michael Ashworth
London

Senior French ex-officers have been recruiting a "white legion" of mercenaries to fight in war-torn Zaire, it was claimed yesterday in a Paris newspaper.

Le Monde alleged that former soldiers, including two senior Elysée Palace officers, have spent the past three months recruiting a multinational force of mercenaries. The paper said that a dozen or more former French officers were already in northern Zaire, along with a "white legion" of 300-400 men, including French, British, Belgians, South Africans and Angolans. Several hundred more troops were due to arrive in the next two weeks.

The alleged purpose of the force was to support the Zairean army in pushing back the rebel forces that currently occupy regions in the north and east of the country. The two named officers, Colonel Alain Le Carro and a former gendarme, Robert Montoya, both served at the Elysée during the presidency of François Mitterrand, who died a year ago today. Colonel Le Carro was head of presidential security until 1994.

The French authorities, including the Elysée Palace itself and the Defence Ministry, at once denied all knowledge of the mercenary operation, still less any involvement. The recruitment exercise, however - said to have been conducted in the name of the Zaire government - appears to have run parallel with France's abortive diplomatic efforts through the autumn to persuade other European countries and the United States to contribute to a multinational humanitarian force for Zaire.

The force was to have brought relief to thousands of Rwandan refugees believed to be stranded in the east of the country. But there were suspicions, even in some circles in France, that the humanitarian mission could easily transform itself, with a little help from Paris, into a military mission shoring up the French-backed regime of Zaire's President Mobutu. This was one reason why other countries were so reluctant to take part and why the idea was eventually abandoned.

The *Le Monde* claim that a force of white mercenaries is gathering in northern Zaire of-

fors one explanation for the persistent reports from Zairean rebel leaders on Monday that French forces had arrived near the northern town of Kisangani. Those reports, relayed from rebel headquarters in the eastern town of Goma, said the 1,000-strong force, supported by mercenaries, had transport aircraft, tanks and helicopters at its disposal.

The reports were furiously denied by officials in Paris. The French Defence Ministry said that France was "aware" of "mercenary forces operating in Africa", but would not elaborate.

The South-African based military advisory company, Executive Outcomes, denied yesterday that it was involved. "Executive Outcomes has no personnel in Zaire and has never had any personnel in Zaire," it said in a press release.

The chairman of Executive Outcomes Eben Barlow maintained that he had not been approached by the Zairean government.

Mr Barlow maintains that he has an undertaking with the Angolan government, for which EO has worked, and his other "clients" that he will not at any stage in the present or the future work for or support the "opposition." The Zairean government has had close ties to Angola's rebel Unita movement.

Mr Barlow said that "if we started to work for the Zairean government against the wishes of the Angolan government then we would lose credibility and probably existing contracts we have with other governments."

The timing of the *Le Monde* revelations, which bear all the hallmarks of an official leak, suggests that they were intended as a direct response to Monday's allegations that French forces were operating in northern Zaire. The message is: "We know there are French troops there, but they have nothing to do with France or French policy."

The allegations came as the Zaire rebels tried to reassure foreign mining companies not to pull out of the area of the country which they control. Rebel leader Laurent Kabila said: "The military pressure in Kisangani and Kalemie has made these companies wary but we want them to come and the soil is ours. We will sell our mines to whoever can offer their services."



Safe return: Schoolchildren watch as a parachutist from the Royal Armed Forces lands safely on the dome of the Omar Ali Saifuddin mosque in Brunei, in a rehearsal for the sultanate's National Day next month. Photograph: AFP

Prescott paves Labour's way to Hong Kong

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

Aware that the fallout from Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty looms as one of the most pressing issues to confront an incoming Labour government, John Prescott, the party's deputy leader, is to visit China and Hong Kong next week.

Mr Prescott's visit follows an intensive trip to Hong Kong and

China last May by Robin Cook, the shadow foreign secretary, which was dominated by questions of British-nationality rights for Hong Kong residents. Mr Cook pledged that a future Labour government would go further than the present administration in offering the right of settlement in Britain to ethnic minorities whose status was threatened by China.

Mr Prescott is likely to find

that this remains a live issue. It will also feature in talks that the Governor, Chris Patten, is to have with ministers in London later in the week.

However, the deputy Labour leader, who has his eye on heading a new Department of Economic Affairs, appears more anxious to talk about trade issues. In China he will be specifically dealing with trading ties to his constituency in Hull.

In Hong Kong there is an acute awareness that Mr Major's government might not last until 30 June when British rule ends. This adds to the lame-duck feeling surrounding Mr Patten's governorship.

Interest in Labour's position on Hong Kong matters is therefore reasonably high but tempered by the far greater interest in the attitude of the new sovereign power.

Mr Prescott has yet to firm up his schedule of meetings, but, as well as meeting the usual array of local politicians, he is hoping to see Tung Chee-hwa, the territory's new head of government, who has held only one meeting with a foreign official since his selection last month. Mr Prescott knows Mr Tung, a shipping magnate, from his days representing the National Union of Seamen.

China has sought to break the long-standing bipartisan policy on Hong Kong and may take the opportunity of the Prescott visit to urge an incoming Labour government to adopt what it sees as a more co-operative stance towards transitional matters affecting the territory.

If so, Mr Prescott can expect to be received at very senior levels of the Chinese government.

Toymaker swallows pride and scraps the doll with a bite

David Osborne
New York

The parents of America can sleep easy again. There are no more nuclear warheads pointing at their children from Russia, violent crime is down in almost every major city - and the Cabbage Patch Snacktime doll has been recalled.

The menace was short-lived but scary. Beckoning from toy-shop shelves since last summer, the pudgy little dollies with a ravenous appetite became one of last Christmas' hottest items. Mattel, the maker of the toy, watched with joy as sales topped the half-a-million mark.

Equipped with guppy-like mechanical mouths, the dolls are meant to munch on pieces of plastic food like

chips and biscuits (also supplied by Mattel).

But it was just after Christmas that the dolls began to reveal their true mission - to snare and digest the hair of their innocent little owners.

With each day, another horror story would drop. The dolls were setting upon little girls everywhere, sucking in their locks and, in some cases, ripping them out at the roots.

With no instructions from Mattel on how the doll operated, desperate parents were at a loss as to how to stop the chewing.

After insisting that the dolls were safe, Mattel now has finally relented and agreed to stop the production line for good. All of the dolls that are still unsold in the shops (and there may not be many) will be recalled; parents

who bought one can claim a \$40 (£23) refund from the company.

To be fair, the number of incidents reached only the tens. But Mattel knows bad publicity when it sees it.

"Our job is to bring joy into children's lives," said a repentant Jill Barad of Mattel. "If any of our products are causing concern, we are committed to responding in a responsible manner."

There has been no fireside broadcast by the President, but the government is evidently relieved.

"These toys were certainly dismaying to parents and kids," Ann Brown of the US Consumer Product Safety Commission said yesterday. "You don't want to come into a child's room and find a doll clinging to a child's hair."



Snack attack: The Cabbage Patch doll

Cyclists given a sporting chance by the Taliban

Tim Johnston
Reuters

Kabul - The ruling Islamic Taliban sought yesterday to prove that it is not against sports - by organising a bicycle race and display of martial arts in the Afghan capital.

Fourteen cyclists took part in the three-mile race between the airport and the Ariana Hotel. The starting line was in front of a tank that guards the approach to the airport.

Most of the cyclists were of Soviet vintage, serving as humble load carriers in between stints as racing machines. With an escort of traffic police riding motorbikes, the cyclists set off

down the cracked tarmac. The policemen cleared the route of cars and pedestrians as the cyclists swung through a roundabout and on to the final stretch.

With a cry of "Allah-u-Akbar" (God is great), Amanullah, Afghanistan's premier cyclist and an employee of the Ministry of National Security, won the race, and with it a battered nickel-plated cup. A citation, written in felt-tipped pen on cardboard, was taped to the base of the trophy.

Almost all Kabul's sports facilities have been looted and destroyed in the fighting, and Amanullah, who like many Afghans uses only one name,

said that during the almost five years of war that has wrecked Kabul, the team had trained indoors on stationary bicycles.

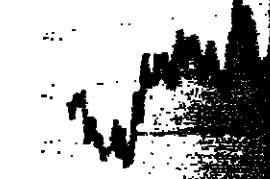
"We need everything, cycles, clothes, shoes, everything," he said after his victory.

He added: "My message to the outside world is that they should invite us to take part in international races, and help us with equipment."

After the race there was a demonstration of wrestling, boxing and other martial arts in the disused Istiqal High School. Mohtayn, one of the young pugilists said: "Normally we would do this on mats, but we do not have any, so they can only show the technical moves."

THE INDEPENDENT
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Other

Rich vein of warmth brightens streets of Belgrade

Protest anger has given way to charm offensive, writes Andrew Gumbel

Belgrade — What's a self-respecting riot policeman in full intimidatory regalia supposed to say when a beguiling young woman student asks him to dance in the middle of an anti-government demonstration? Say yes? Smash her on the head? Or just stand there looking awkward and smile?

There has been an almost surreal atmosphere in Belgrade these past few weeks, in which charm, good humour and a rich vein of satirical inventiveness have proved more powerful than any number of batons, water-cannon, riot shields and tear-gas canisters.

The students and opposition party supporters pressing the government to acknowledge its defeat in last November's municipal elections are not just political agitators earnestly fighting for their rights. They are having the time of their lives, and every night is an ear-splittingly lively party.

First there were the firecrackers and the multi-coloured party whistles imported from Bulgaria by some enterprising racketeer. Then came the loudspeakers blasting wild gypsy music into the bitterly cold winter night, transforming the capital's icy streets into a slithery giant dance floor. And then there have been the merciless wisecracks at the expense of the ruling regime.

President Slobodan Milosevic announced that he still loved the Serbian people, so the demonstrators shouted: "Slobo, we love you too." The speaker of the Serbian parliament, Dragan Tomickovic, lashed out at the demonstrators with a string of insulting adjectives only to find his words reprinted on T-shirts and banners that read: "Yes, we are feeble-minded, under-aged, manipulated and pro-fascist!"

When the riot police started pouring into the capital from all around the country, they too became the butt of the demonstrators' ridicule. "Hey Mr Policeman, isn't your wife lonely while you're away on business? Who do you think she's with right now while you're staring at us?"

More recently, the demonstrators have tried to make friends with the police, offering them chocolates and sweets and inviting them to read their leaflets. At first the police remained impassive, but in the past few days they have told the students to leave

their goodies by the side of the road so they can pick them up as they go off duty.

On Monday night, which was the Serbian Orthodox Christmas Eve, the police disappeared from the streets altogether as more than 100,000 people walked and danced across town for a late-evening Mass at St Sava Cathedral.

It has been a remarkable display of democracy in action, without a hint of violence or resentment from any quarter. The students have analysed protest movements which date back to 1968 and have tried to avoid the mistakes of the past. They have issued a short list of minimum demands — reinstatement of the election results, greater freedom in the media and the resignation of the dean of Belgrade University — rather than starting off over-optimistic and having to back-track later.

They have kept their protests separate from those of the opposition to underline their political independence. They have refused to meet Mr Milosevic, knowing that any such meeting risks being manipulated against them in the official media. And they have kept their protests short to keep everyone fresh and enthusiastic day after day.

The opposition coalition, meanwhile, has shown an assured knack for civil disobedience. To counter the propaganda broadcast by the state television news at 7.30 every night they have got Belgraders to "drown out" the official version of the day's events by blowing whistles, banging on pots and pans, letting off fireworks and simply screaming at the top of their lungs.

Last Sunday they worked around a ban on marching down Belgrade's main boulevards by inviting their supporters to drive into the centre and



Flickering hopes: An opposition supporter lights candles in the snow outside Belgrade's main Serbian Orthodox Church Photograph: Reuters

then pretend to break down. "Wet cables! Wet cables!" drivers would mutter as they peered with mock seriousness into their bonnets. One man, asked what was wrong with his car, answered: "Its soul has broken down. It has been broken for a long, long time."

New ideas include refusing to pay utility bills and jamming the switch-

boards of ministries and other government offices by bombarding them with telephone calls.

"The less work these people do, the better it is for the country," said Zoran Djindjic, one of the three leaders of the opposition coalition Zajedno (Together).

If this struggle were all about creativity, then the government would

have caved in long ago. As it is, its response has been a near-total silence, broken only by an occasional burst of invective that invariably falls flat.

One suspects that President Milosevic cannot believe what he is seeing — his authority flouted day after day with an irreverence that nobody in Serbia would have dared show even a few months ago.

Autocrats rely on fear to bolster their position, but fear has vanished off the Belgrade streets like air whistling out of a balloon. Mr Milosevic cannot match the humour or the verve of his spirited opponents, and that ultimately may well prove his downfall.

Comment, page 13

Life under Milosevic: The pain and the protest

September 1987 — Slobodan Milosevic takes over as Serbia's Communist leader.
May 1989 — Milosevic becomes President.
March 1991 — Milosevic crushes opposition demonstrations in Belgrade with tanks.
June 1991–November 1995 — Wars in former Yugoslavia.
17 November 1996 — Opposition coalition Zajedno (Together) defeats Milosevic's Socialists (ex-Communists) in municipal elections in Bel-

grade and a dozen other Serbian cities.
18 November — Daily pro-democracy street protests begin after Socialist authorities annul opposition's election victories.
1 December — Socialists underline refusal to compromise by denouncing opposition as "destructive, violent fascists".
24 December — First police violence against peaceful demonstrators in Belgrade results in one death.

27 December — Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe upholds Zajedno's election victories and urges Milosevic to respect will of voters.
2 January 1997 — Serbian Orthodox Church breaks with Milosevic, accusing him of bringing nation to point of complete collapse.
6 January — Army distances itself from Milosevic, saying it will not use force to end protests.

Russian oil spill spells disaster for Japan's coast

Mikuni (Reuters) — Fishing villages in north-west Japan feared economic and environmental catastrophe yesterday as oil from a sunken Russian tanker coated beaches and threatened prized shellfish beds.

Oil slicks have hit the shore along a 60-mile stretch from Kyoto Prefecture to Fukui Prefecture, whose rocky coast is dotted with fish farms, fishing ports and tourist resorts. A Maritime Safety Agency (MSA) spokesman said:

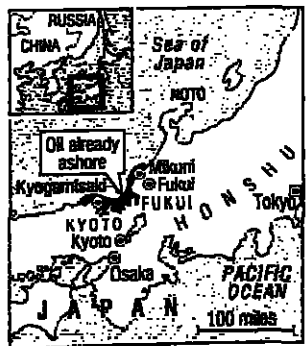
"Oil has come ashore at more than seven places, from Kyogamatsuki in Kyoto to Oshihama in Fukui Prefecture, where the bow of the tanker has drifted ashore," the spokesman said.

At a beach at Mikuni, about 210 miles north-west of Tokyo, the villagers grimaced at the pungent odour of heavy oil as they surveyed the wreck of the ship that has caused Japan's second worst oil spill.

"This is where I swim in summer, and my mother dives for abalone," said 12-year-old Koji Ogiwara. "At this time of the year, she would normally be looking for seaweed. It's all destroyed and I don't know what we are going to do."

In Mikuni alone, a fishing town of 20,000 people, the oil spill threatened to wipe out the town's annual fishing income of 30m yen (£260,000).

The oil slicks also threaten a stretch of rocky Sea of Japan coastline on the picturesque Noto Peninsula, east of Fukui.



The popular tourist area is famous for shrimp, crabs and "Ama", women who make their livings diving for shellfish and rare seaweed without the aid of air tanks or snorkels.

Intermittent snow and cold have dogged efforts to stop the oil spill since the 13,157-tonne Russian-registered *Nakhodka* broke in two during storms in the Sea of Japan on Thursday.

Kenji Ondo, of the Fukui Prefectural Fisheries Organisation, said he feared long-term damage to the local industry.

"If the oil reaches rocky parts of the coast, ecosystems could be seriously damaged. If it enters the food chain via the seaweed, it could slow down the growth of organisms all the way up the chain," he said.

The MSA spokesman said that high seas had prevented an oil dispersal operation using detergent chemicals.

"We still have no idea of how much oil escaped from the vessel," he said.

Chill wind blows in paradise as world's oldest monarchy celebrates 700 years

John Lichfield
Paris

He is half-American, entering middle age and he has spent his entire life in the family business. With his receding hairline and gold-rimmed spectacles, he might be the chief executive of a small, Californian software company. He believes he has the answer to the corrosive short-termism of the politics of the late 20th century (or any other century). The answer is monarchy. Hardly surprising. His family business is the longest, continuously installed monarchy on the planet (admittedly ruling an area marginally larger than a golf course). Nor is it just a ceremonial monarchy, like the Windsors. It is one of the few monarchies with real power (admittedly, with a Prime Minister and Police Chief appointed by France).

His name is Albert Grimaldi. He is the 38-year-old camera-shy brother of Caroline and Stephanie, son of Prince Rainier of Monaco and of Alfred Hitchcock's favourite actress. The Grimaldi family business — to which Albert is heir apparent — celebrates its 700th anniversary today. The celebrations in the principality will last all year but begin today with a Te Deum, the unveiling of a family statue and a multi-media extravaganza on the sea-front. Far from being an anachronism, Prince Albert told *Le Figaro* that he believed absolute monarchies were uniquely placed to thrive in the modern



Family fortunes: Prince Rainier with his apparent Prince Albert, and (right) the late Grace Kelly Photographs: AP

world. Only they, he suggested, can conduct "authentic, long-term policies".

It is true that, during his 47 years on the throne, Albert's father, Prince Rainier, has cannily adjusted his tiny fiefdom to the demands of a post-war world dominated not by old money but by international business and entertainment. He fought General de Gaulle to a beneficial draw on Monaco's tax and business status in 1962. He oversaw huge, high-rise property development. He introduced new cultural and sporting activities.

Rainier inherited a playground and tax-haven for the rich and idle, and re-shaped it as a playground and tax-haven for the rich and energetic. Monaco no longer depends on casinos,

yachting and tourism. It depends on off-shore banking and property speculation. Its most celebrated expatriate residents are no longer tax-avoiding, British and French aristocrats. They are tax-avoiding, media-attracting

co may have thrived on the change but his own family, arguably, paid, and continues to pay, the price. After the death of Princess Grace in a car-crash in 1982, their daughters, Stephanie and Caroline, were

swallowed up by the world of nouveau-riche, exhaustively paparazzi-chronicled hedonism. Caroline's second husband, Stefano Casiraghi, was killed in a speed-boat accident in 1990. Stephanie, after a brief career as a pop star, married the French play-boy, Daniel Ducruet, in



Family fortunes: Prince Rainier with his apparent Prince Albert, and (right) the late Grace Kelly Photographs: AP

1992. She divorced last year following his brief liaison with a former Miss Nude Belgium.

The people of Monaco, unlike the people of Britain, have forgiven their royal family every discretion. There is no serious threat to the Grimaldis' continuing reign, despite the almost complete absence of democracy. Eighteen people are elected to a National Council but the Prince retains absolute power, advised by a four-person cabinet, headed by a senior French civil servant. There are few authentic Monégasques: in any case — 6,617 out of a population of 29,972, which contains 121 other disenfranchised nationalities.

Lately, however, there have been chillier winds blowing through the 4km by 1km par-

adise. Property prices have tumbled. The government, which runs most things, is now running something unheard of — a budget deficit. The state-controlled Société des Bains de Mer, operating the casinos, hotels and restaurants, is in the red for the third year running. Some residents, especially the more commercially savvy types attracted by Rainier, are wondering aloud whether more should have been done to diversify from purely finance and property-based activities to newer industries such as information technology and telecommunications. There are even the first mutterings about the democratic unaccountability of the bureaucratic and royal elite.

Democratic rebellion is most unlikely. Few in Monaco are from their uppers. There are three times more members of the principality's state orchestra (90) than registered unemployed (30). But Prince Albert, for all his talk of royal long-term planning, will not receive an entirely problem and risk-free inheritance. Which begs the two questions which have exercised residents of the principality for many years now. When will Prince Albert marry? And when, if ever, will Prince Rainier give way for his serious-minded son? In his interview with *Figaro*, Albert pointed out that abdication is not dreamed of in the Monégasque constitution. But he also drew attention to his own advancing years by announcing his forthcoming retirement from the national bob-sleigh team.

Newt makes a final plea

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

Speaker Newt Gingrich yesterday made a last-minute plea for support from Republican colleagues, as the House of Representatives prepared to vote on whether to give him a second term as its leader, despite his admitted breaches of Congressional ethics rules.

As the fateful moment approached, senior Republicans were outwardly confident that Mr Gingrich would prevail. Majority leader Dick Armey assured reporters: "I see no reason to doubt that he will be elected on a first ballot."

In fact, the air dripped with suspense as party managers worked frantically to limit the number of possible Republican defections and prevent either a second ballot, or worst of all, the election of the Minority leader, Dick Gephardt, the Democrat candidate and the Speaker's only challenger.

Only narrowly does the arithmetic favour Mr Gingrich. The Republicans have 227 votes, a margin of 19 over the combined forces of the 217 Democrats and one independent, who normally votes with the Democrats. Five Republicans however have said they would oppose him, some hinting they would seek to nominate another candidate — possibly Mr Armey or even Jim Leach, the highly respected chairman of the House Banking Committee, one of the Speaker's declared opponents.

But there was no disguising the nervousness of many Republicans at marching to the party gun before they knew the full facts of the case. Only later this week, or next, will full details of Mr Gingrich's transgressions — said to involve the illegal use of tax-exempt funds to finance a college course which he taught — be made available.

Either way, it seems, the Democrats come out ahead. If the Speaker does go down, they would have scored a huge symbolic victory, exacting revenge for the 1989 downfall on ethics charges of their own Speaker, Jim Wright, after a campaign by a harem-knuckled Republican backbencher from Georgia named Newt Gingrich.

Whatever the outcome, the House Ethics Committee, even-ly divided between Republicans and Democrats, will hold a closed meeting on the affair. Then the full report on Mr Gingrich's transgressions will be made public, and the committee will decide punishment.

Most probably, he will be reprimanded — a modest sanction that permits him to remain Speaker — but a rebuke which Democrats will not let him forget.

obituaries / gazette

Burton Lane

Although Burton Lane wrote superb melodies for films and shows for over 50 years, he is one of those composers who is revered within the profession but whose name is less familiar with the public than it deserves to be. His work for the stage includes one of the acknowledged masterpieces of musical theatre, *Finian's Rainbow*, while his film work includes such hits as "Everything I Have Is Yours", "I Hear Music", "How About You?" and "Too Late Now".

Born Burton Levy in 1912 in New York, he studied classical piano as a child and at the age of 11 started composing, blending classical forms with modern rhythms. At 14 he was heard by an agent of theatrical producers, the Shuberts, who commissioned him to write songs for a revue, *Greenwich Village Follies*. When the revue was cancelled due to the illness of its star James Barton (Lane would have been the only 14-year-old composer with a score on Broadway), Lane declined to follow his father in his real estate business and found work as a pianist at the publisher Remick's, where he became a protégé of George Gershwin, who both encouraged him and gave him advice. (One of Lane's later hits, "Say My Heart", imitates the broken descending scale of an earlier Gershwin tune, "Tell Me More".)

He also became friends with the lyricist Howard Dietz, and his first two Broadway songs were interpolations in the Dietz-Schwartz revue *Three's a Crowd* (1930). The following year, with the lyricist Harold Adamson, he wrote "Say the Word" for *The Little Show* and the complete score for *Earl Carroll Vanities*. With the Depression, he turned to arranging and accompanying café singers, and with Adamson had two modest song successes in 1933, "Tony's Wife" and "Look Who's Here".

The MGM writer Allen Rivkin heard Lane playing a melody at a party and was impressed enough to recommend him to his studio. The song was "Everything I Have Is Yours" (lyrics by Adamson), which was immediately interpolated into the Joan Crawford-Clark Gable musical *Dancing Lady* (1933). Further films to feature Lane/Adamson melodies included *Bottoms Up* (1934), *Strictly Dynamite* (1934), *Kid Millions* (1934), and *Foiled Berge* (1935).

Signed by Paramount in 1937, he persuaded them to put the young lyricist Frank Loesser under contract. "I heard a couple of songs Loesser had written with Manning Sherwin," said Lane, "and I was bowled over by Frank's lyrics." Lane and Loesser wrote a beautiful score for the Bob Hope/Martha Ray musical *College Swing* (1938), including "Mo-

ments Like This" and "Howdja Like To Love Me?", plus "Say My Heart" for *Cocacola Grove* (1938). "The Lady in Love With You" for *Some Like It Hot* (1939), and "I Hear Music" for *Dancing on a Dime* (1941). Lane returned to Broadway to collaborate with the lyricist/librettist E.Y. Harburg on the score for *Hold on to Your Hats* (1940), which was Al Jolson's final Broadway show. (It closed prematurely when Jolson decided to return to the sun of Florida.)

Back at MGM, Lane wrote (with lyrics by Ralph Freed) one of his greatest hits, "How About You?", introduced by Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland in *Babes on Broadway* (1941), a wistful ballad, "Poor You" (lyrics by Harburg), sung by a young Frank Sinatra in *Ship Ahoy* (1942), and for the screen version of *Dubarry* was a *Lady* (1943) a catchily syncopated comedy number (lyrics by Ralph Freed) called "Madame, I Love Your Crepe Suzettes".

At Dublin, a former lyricist on the Busby Berkeley musicals, collaborated with Lane on the Broadway score for *Laurel Room Only* (1944) starring the comedy team Olsen and Johnson. The Shuberts, who were producing the show, were feuding with Ascap, the songwriters' union, and refused to have the songs broadcast, but three years later Lane persuaded the singer Dorothy Shay to sing the show's hillbilly tune, "Feudin' and Fussin'" on Bing Crosby's radio show and it became an enormous hit.

In 1947 Lane had the biggest success of his career with the score for *Finian's Rainbow*. E.Y. Harburg, the most socially conscious of all songwriters, stated: "I had long wanted to do a show about a Southern racist who is turned black, and I'd always loved the idea about a leprechaun with a pot of gold." The merging of the two ideas produced a show which dealt with race relations in the context of an escapist musical comedy. ("My family have always hated immigrants," says the Southern senator. "Ever since we came to this country.") Harburg's long-

time collaborator Harold Arlen had turned the project down as "too political", and Lane battled with Harburg over some of the content, persuading him to take out a lynching sequence, and ensuring that the politics were tempered with humour and compassion as well as a host of gorgeous melodies.

The biggest immediate hit song was "How Are Things in Glocca-Morra?", but others to achieve popularity included "If This Isn't Love", the captivating waltz for the leprechaun, "When I'm Not Near the Girl I Love" and "Old Devil Moon", an unusually constructed ballad. The gavotte, "Something Sort of Grandish", the lilting "Look to the Rainbow" and the madrigal "When the Idle Poor Become the Idle Rich" are other numbers with enchanting melodies to match Harburg's sharp lyrics.

Lane then collaborated for the first time with Alan Jay Lerner on the score for MGM's *Royal Wedding* (1951), which included a lovely ballad, "Too Late Now", which was nominated for an Oscar, and the song with the longest title in song history, "How Could You Believe Me When I Said I Loved You When You Know I've Been a Liar All My Life?" "We thought the film was getting too cosy," said Lane, "and needed something rickety-ticky." He later expressed dissatisfaction with some of Lerner's works. "I thought some of my tunes deserved better, especially 'Every Night At Seven' and 'I Left My Hat in Haiti', which was contrived." One of the melodies, used for Fred Astaire's celebrated dance on the walls and ceilings, had originally been heard in *Kid Millions* as "I Want to Be a Minstrel Man". With Lerner's new lyrics, it became "You're All the World to Me".

A 1953 television musical, *Junior Miss*, had songs by Lane and Dorothy Fields, and in the same year Lane collaborated with his longtime friend Irvin Berlin on the film *Give a Girl a Break*, which, despite some good songs ("Applause, Applause", "In Our United States" and fine dancing by the Champions, Bob Fosse and Debbie Reynolds, was given little fanfare by its studio.

Lane started working with Harburg again on a screen musical based on *Huckleberry Finn* to star Gene Kelly, Danny Kaye and William Warfield, but when Harburg was blacklisted by Hollywood for his left-wing leanings, Alan Jay Lerner was brought in as lyricist. Though they completed a full score, the film was never made. Later, when Lerner wrote a musical about extra-sensory perception called *I Picked a Daisy*, his initial composer was Richard Rodgers, but when the two men terminated their partnership Lane stepped in and composed a fine score for a flawed show, now titled *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* (1965).

Lane blamed the problems on the show's book and Lerner's unwillingness to cut material. When it became apparent to Lane during the try-out that the show would not succeed, he allegedly organised the firing of the leading man, Louis Jourdan - not because he was playing the part badly, but be-



Lane on his first marriage, to Marion Teamen, in 1935

Photograph: Corbis-Bettmann/UP

cause Lane felt a better singer would preserve the songs more viably on the eventual original cast album. The songs were indeed highly praised though the show was not. The title tune immediately became a standard, but the buoyant "SS Bernard Cohn", torchy "What Did I Have I Don't Have", lilting "Hurry, It's Lovely Up Here" and bouncy "Wait Till We're 65" are among other delights in one of the last great "traditional" Broadway scores.

Despite complaining that working with the drug-addicted Lerner resulted in "the worst two years of my life", he worked with the lyricist again on what was to be Lane's last Broadway show, *Carmelina* (1979), starring Georgia Brown and based on the Gina Lollobrigida film *Buona Sera, Mrs Campbell*. It lasted only two weeks, but boasted some good melodies, notably two wistfully nostalgic numbers, "It's Time for a Love Song" and "One More Walk Around the Garden".

The following year, Lane and Harburg teamed one last time to write a ballad, "Where Have I Seen Your Face Before",

recorded by Maxine Sullivan and Michael Feinstein on their respective album tributes to Lane. In 1982 Lane and Sammy Cahn wrote songs for a poorly executed animation feature, *Heidi's Song*.

But *Finian's Rainbow* is the score for which Lane will always be most remembered and it was to have an effect on his writing too. "I used to think in terms of having hit songs in a show," he said, "but this libretto was so strong I decided not to try to be commercial, but to write what I thought the characters should sing - and that's when your best writing comes through. I've never tried to write a hit song since, and I've had more hits since then than I ever had before." Harburg said of Lane, "He was very critical of himself, always changing things and wanting to get things better - but that's true of any good writer, isn't it?"

Tom Vallance

Burton Levy (Burton Lane), composer, born New York 2 February 1912; twice married (one daughter); died New York 5 January 1997.

David Hartigan

David Hartigan was a member of the keyboard staff of Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, for over 25 years and his musical gifts flourished most strongly through his contact with pupils. It is likely that he could have developed a career as a piano soloist; however he found more fulfilment in the music room and the drawing-room than on the concert-hall platform.

Born in Stockport in 1946, the son of an amateur violinist father, Hartigan first discovered his love of music while at Stockport School. Moving to the Royal Manchester College of Music, he gained inspiration from the pianists Derek Wyndham and Ryszard Bakst, who detected a highly unusual musical talent beginning to emerge. Hartigan always had broad horizons, and enjoyed the company of a wide circle of friends. He went on to study with Walter Klein in Salzburg and this not only introduced him to different styles of music-making but also opened his eyes to literature and culture.

As a teacher at Chetham's from 1971 he was a mentor, encouraging his pupils to achieve both technical excellence and depth of meaning, while playing as soloists or as chamber musicians. His hallmark was his respect and admiration for the discoveries in meaning which pupils made for themselves. Through experience he learned the art of when to intervene and correct and when to stand back and allow talent to flourish in its own individual direction. Never possessive of his students, he sought opportunities for them to study with other great teachers and was constantly in search of funds to enable young people to travel abroad, for masterclasses and concerts.

Hartigan himself appreciated all that was best in the performance of music. He rarely missed a production at Covent Garden. He was excited at the possibilities which now exist in Manchester with the opening of the Bridgewater Hall and was keen to encourage all musicians to attend recitals and concerts. He would willingly travel with them and many pupils will remember his company and his conversations on these journeys.

Hartigan's great skills as a teacher were put to best effect with those pupils whom many found difficult to teach. He often championed the cause of the young talented musicians who were least certain of their own talents or the direction of their lives. His work was inspired by a passionate caring that talent should not be wasted.

Following his death a fund has been set up at Chetham's for "The David Hartigan Memorial Piano Award", primarily designed to assist young pianists in their education.

Peter F. Hullah

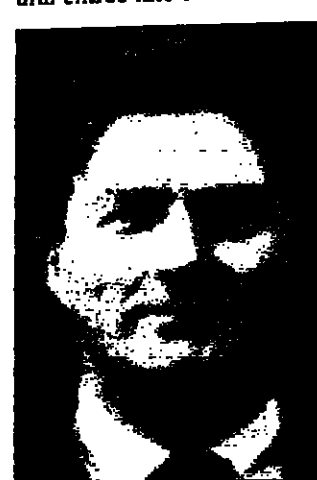
With his broad, robust build, tall frame and rugged good looks one might have guessed that David Hartigan was a handsome Northern hill farmer rather than a sensitive and inspiring music teacher, writes Derek Granger. But Hartigan had always vigorously engaged in any number of demanding athletic pursuits. As an exceptionally powerful swimmer he had taken part in several marathon swims for charity. He was also a keen energetic cyclist, a strong long-distance swimmer and a regular weightlifter and body-builder.

What his friends will chiefly recall, however, is the abound-

ing and undeviating good nature that was the true mark of his personality and which not only made him the most painstaking, caring and patient of teachers but also the most warm-hearted, convivial and companionable of friends.

Hartigan was totally without pretension and always remained close to his Northern roots. Although he was often tempted from time to time by offers of work elsewhere he remained deeply loyal to Chetham's famous school of music, which he loved, and he chose to remain in Manchester, making that city the centre of his life and work. Manchester duly rewarded his gregarious appetite for social life by providing him with a broad circle of friends. At home in the leafy Stockport suburb of Heaton Moor (where he was also an enthusiastic and knowledgeable gardener) he generously entertained his friends and relatives cooking dinner for his guests, drawn from a wide range of Manchester's professional and artistic worlds and often playing the piano for them afterwards.

But the instantly appealing qualities of Hartigan's character, a natural openness and good-heartedness combined with a ready wit and distinct social flair, gave him also a natural entrée into a wider world



Hartigan: gregarious

of cosmopolitan artistic and Bohemian life. He had been the guest of Somerset Maugham at his villa, La Mauresque, near Cap Ferrat, where he became a close friend of Maugham's secretary, Alan Searle. He had stayed in Hollywood with the great American-Hungarian film-maker George Cukor, veteran director of Greta Garbo and Katharine Hepburn. In Salzburg, where he was a frequent visitor for the annual Mozart festival, he had been entertained by the great Philadelphia art collector Henry McIlhenny. On the weekend before his death Hartigan had been staying in Oxfordshire with his old friend Sir Hardy Amies, where he had helped to arrange the Christmas concert at the village church of Langford. (In 1989 Hartigan had also arranged the London concert in celebration of Amies's 80th birthday.)

In 1973 Hartigan provided the music for a Granada Television drama *Poor Girl*, adapted from a ghost story by the novelist Elizabeth Taylor. He had chosen the incidental music from the piano compositions of Schumann, one of his favourite composers, which he performed himself with his own delicate and masterly touch.

David Hartigan, pianist and music teacher; born 15 July 1946; teacher of piano, Chetham's School of Music 1971-96; assistant head of keyboard 1996; died Oakmere, Cheshire 31 December 1996.



"How about you?", Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney in *Babes on Broadway*, 1941. Lane wrote the music. Photograph: Kobal Collection

Norman Florence

Ever since Hay-on-Wye gained the sobriquet "The Town of Books" bibliophiles from all over the world have flocked to its 30-odd bookshops stuffed with millions of books covering every subject from archaeology to zymology. In recent years its fame has expanded greatly thanks to the annual Festival of Literature, which attracts a growing and dedicated following to Hay to listen to authors ranging from Salman Rushdie and William Trevor to Edwina Currie and Roy Hattersley.

The festival's success rests squarely with its founder, Norman Florence. This year sees its 10th anniversary. In many ways it will be regarded as a tribute to Florence who, with his wife the actress Rhoda Lewis, and their son Peter, created the glorious jam-boree in 1988.

Norman Florence was born in South Africa. While at the University of Cape Town he was spotted by Emylia Williams, who was then touring the world. Williams sponsored him for a place at the Central School of

Dramatic Art in London and he arrived in Britain in 1954. After graduating he appeared in numerous films and television plays, often starring as a "badie" in series like *The Saint*, *Z Cars*, *The Avengers* and *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* He also directed an award-winning film of Wole Soyinka's *The Swamp Dwellers* which won acclaim at the 1966 Berlin Film Festival.

In the 1970s he focused his energetic talents on theatre management, working alongside Sam Wanamaker on the Globe

project. He managed theatres in Birmingham, Northampton and Ipswich before coming to Wales as the administrator of the ground-breaking bilingual theatre company Theatre Yr Ymylon. With his son he then set up Projects Company, commissioning and producing world tours of shows including *The Pit of War*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* and a musical version of Christopher Fry's *The Boy with a Cart*.

Norman Florence's great ambition was to create something of excellence at home which would be recognised worldwide. That the Hay Festival has appeared on national television in 16 countries and draws thousands of adherents from across the globe is testimony to the fulfilment of that objective.

Tony Heath

Norman Samuel Frederickson Florence, actor and festival organiser; born Cape Town 3 January 1933; married 1960 Rhoda Lewis (one son); died Bronllys, Powys 17 December 1996.

Jack Nance



Cult status and apotheosis in one film: Nance in his friend David Lynch's *Eraserhead*, 1977. Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

Few images in contemporary cinema resonate as does the startling poster for the director David Lynch's equally startling feature debut, the 1977 film *Eraserhead*. Backlit, hair resembling an uncontrollable lavatory brush inadvertently merged with a black-and-white aurora borealis, one eye staring upwards (naturally), the other eye shaded, the pupil alone barely visible, this was the face of Jack Nance, playing Lynch's creation Henry Spencer, the truly disturbed father of a monstrous, ill-formed mutated baby, a child who wreaks terrible, awe-inspiring revenge on Henry for causing it to be born.

A synopsis could never do justice to Lynch's deeply disturbing surreal fantasy, which is rooted in a doubly disturbing narrative cine-reality by two things: the remarkable sound editing of Alan Splet, and the unique performance (or, to be accurate, non-performance) of Nance, who achieved both cult status and apotheosis in this single film alone.

Nance's role itself was not made easy by the fact that Lynch starting filming *Eraserhead* as a funded short for the American Film Institute, but the shooting was protracted over six years, and Lynch is on record as describing the main problem of his production as "maintaining such a singular hair-style over such a long period. It just stayed up in the air - it was so tall that the first night none of us could believe that we could ever film something like this."

In a television interview, Nance remembered that it was sometimes not just days, but months, and even years, between takes. Nevertheless, the resultant cohesive fantasy became one of the most deeply, and fundamentally, disturbing, and disturbed of all cinema, a personal exploration on being and a terrifyingly unsettling vision of birth. (And deeply influential, notably on the 1986 film *Alien*.)

Jack Nance, *Eraserhead* himself, grew up in Oak Cliff, Dallas, Texas, and studied under the famed founder of the Dallas Theater Center, Paul Baker. Nance headed for California in the 1960s and worked for a brief while at the Pasadena Playhouse, followed by a period at the Circus theatre company in San Francisco.

David Lynch has described Nance as "a zero-motivated actor, content to stay at home, not even watching television, just sitting, thinking in his chair, wearing his little slippers". This eccentricity endeared Nance to Lynch, himself no slouch in the eccentric stakes, and this mutuality is reflected in Nance's subsequent film work which, with few exceptions, like the low-budget shocker *Ghoulies* (1985) or *Barfly* (1987), has been exclusively in the province of Lynch, though never again did Nance play a leading role.

Lynch cast him in his grandiose and seriously underrated box office catastrophe *Dune* (1984) and again in his two prestigious features *Blue Velvet* (1986) and *Wild At Heart* (1990). Nance also played a



Ambition: Florence in 1982

prominent role in Lynch's notorious television series *Twin Peaks*, in which he memorably essayed a lumber-mill foreman, fish-loving Pete Martell, married to actress Piper Laurie, who was responsible for discovering the body of the murdered Laura Palmer. The director and actor Dennis Hopper also cast Nance in a small role in the gang warfare movie *Colors* in 1988, almost certainly as a homage to Lynch, to whom Hopper has referred as "the first American surrealist director".

At the very end of 1996, Jack Nance had a violent argument with two Hispanic men in a doughnut shop across the road from his home in South Pasadena. On 30 December a friend checked in to see how he was, and found him dead. Los

Angeles County Sheriff Sergeant Noel Lanier confirmed that Nance had blunt force trauma to his head, indicating that one of the men had hit Nance on the head with his fist.

"I considered Jack one of my best friends," said David Lynch when the news was revealed. "I'll miss his dry absurdist humour, his stories and his friendship. I'll miss all the characters he would have played." Jack Nance's last role was for Lynch, as a garage mechanic in *Lost Highway*, due to be released this coming spring.

Tony Sloman

Marvin John Nance, actor; born Dallas, Texas 1943; died South Pasadena, California 30 December 1996.

Fortcoming marriages

Mr S. D. R. Wilken and Miss L. A. Villiers. The engagement is announced between Sean, son of the late Mr John Wilken and of Mrs Elsie Wilken, now of Oremington, Gloucestershire, and Theresa, daughter of Mr and Mrs George Villiers, of London.

Birthdays

Miss Shirley Bascy, singer, 60; Mr David Bowie, musician and actor, 50;

Mr Stuart Cameron, former chairman, Gallaher Ltd, 73; Professor Stephen Hawking, mathematician, 55; Lord Hollenden, former chairman, L & R, 83; Mr Andrew Hunter MP, 54; The Right Rev Edward Knapp-Fisher, Honorary Assistant Bishop, Diocese of Chichester, 82; Professor Sir Robert May, zoologist and ecologist, 60; Air Commodore Joan Metcalfe, former director of RAF Nursing Services, 74; Mr Ron Moody, actor, 73; Mr Robert Parry MP, 64; Mr Kenneth Purchase MP, 58; Miss Inez Read, MEP, 58; Professor Brian Reddaway, economic consultant to the World Bank,

84; Professor Charles Tomlinson, Emeritus Professor of English, Bristol University, 70; Miss Galina Ilanowa, former prima ballerina, 87; Sir Geoffrey Whalen, deputy chairman of Peugeot Talbot, 61; Professor Alan Wilson, Vice-Chancellor, Leeds University, 58.

Anniversaries

Births: Alfred Russel Wallace, naturalist, 1823; William Wilkie Collins, novelist, 1824; Frank Nelson Doubleday, publisher and editor, 1862; John Joseph Curtin, Australian prime minister, 1885; Dennis Yates

Wheatley, novelist, 1897; Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike, Sri Lankan prime minister, 1899; Elvis Presley, rock singer, 1935; Deshaire Gaillet, astronomer, 1642; Sir John Dalrymple, first Earl of Stair, politician and lawyer, 1707; John Baskerville, printer and typographer, 1755; Eli Whitney, inventor and perfecter of the cotton gin, 1825; Paul Verlaine, poet, 1895; Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, first Baron Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts, 1941; Chou En-lai, Chinese leader, 1926; sugar, bacon and butter were rationed in Britain, 1940; in New York, seven floors of the Empire

State Building caught fire, 1963. Today is the Feast Day of St Adrian of Canterbury, St Apollinaris the Apologist, St Eriard, St Gudula, St Lucian of Beauvais, St Pega, St Severinus of Noricum Repense, St Severinus of Septempeda, St Thorfinn and St Wulain.

Lectures National Gallery: Hughelsey, "Collectors (I): a British collector in Florence: George, 3rd Earl Cowper", 1pm. Tate Gallery: Justine Hopkins, "The Proper Study of Mankind: transfor-

mations of the human figure (ii)", 1pm. King's College London, London WC2: Dr Catherine Osborne, "Suicide: is there a Christian response?", 5.15pm.

Werner van Zoggel

A Service of Celebration for the life of Werner van Zoggel, of Seligenstadt, Germany, and employee of Reuters for 27 years in Frankfurt, Geneva and London, will be held at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London EC4, on Tuesday 14 January, at 12 noon.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, President, Royal Yacht Squadron, will visit the London International Boat Show, Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, London SW5, and at Portsmouth, Victoria Support, attends a fund-raising dinner at Grosvenor House Hotel, London W1.

Changing of the Guard The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment Band will play the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS may be

telephoned to 0171-293 2811 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2812) or sent to 0171-293 2810, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Major can pick up the Tory torch of reform



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If there is one argument that a change in the voting system is unnecessary, it is the Prime Minister's conversion yesterday to the cause of reform of the House of Lords. Who needs a multi-party parliament elected by proportional representation when flexible politicians like John Major and Tony Blair already effectively operate coalition politics within a two-party system? No sooner had the junior partner in Mr Major's coalition, the One Nation Tory Party, threatened to withdraw its support from his government and open talks with Mr Blair's Olive Branch Alliance, than the Prime Minister said he was prepared to consider "sensible reforms of the Lords".

Mr Blair's main objection to proportional representation is that it tends to give disproportionate power to small parties, because they are more likely to hold the balance of power. But that is in effect what happened this week. First Hugh Dykes, the European affairs spokesman of the One Nation Tories, asked to join the Labour-Liberal Democrat talks on how to make the Lords more democratic. Then George Walden, the One Nation's education spokesman, yesterday said he thought the hereditary principle in the Upper House was "totally and completely indefensible".

Now, Mr Major is in the strange position of declaring that constitutional change is one of the three key election

issues that divides the parties, while conceding the strength of the case for change in one important area. But be magnanimous: welcome his acceptance of unspecified "sensible" reforms; even welcome his use of the cliché, "If it ain't broke don't fix it," since it is obvious to anyone with eyes and ears that the House of Lords is broke and needs fixing. Mr Major's feeble defence of the hereditary principle – that it was better than prime ministerial appointment – cannot hold.

The importance of the Dykes-Walden Declaration, of course, goes much further than this. It confirms that the One Nationers of Mr Major's coalition have decided that if it puts the survival of his government first, it will be steamrollered by his senior partner, the Thatcherite Party. And it asserts that One Nation Tories are not single-issue pro-Europeans. Mr Dykes is, along with Sir Edward Heath, the most forceful pro-European Tory MP. And it was Mr Walden who threatened to bring down the Government if Mr Major escalated the "beef war" of non-co-operation last summer.

The important lesson to draw from these recent events is that One Nation Toryism is a broad-based and distinct ideology with a long and venerable history. Anyone who suggests that people like Hugh Dykes are somehow behaving in an un-Tory fashion, or even that they should leave the Conservative

Party, has little sense of history. These One Nationers may be a minority now, but they are the inheritors of a proud tradition of Tory constitutional reform.

Several heavyweight Tories, including Chris Patten and Stephen Dorrell, once supported electoral reform. Others, including Malcolm Rifkind and Michael Forsyth, once supported limited self-rule for Scotland. Yesterday, Mr Major insisted that these were dangerous causes, but the Dykes has been breached and the Prime Minister's attempt to save some prized possessions from the flood looks increasingly doomed. As well as the

House of Lords, Mr Dykes wants to talk to Labour and the Liberal Democrats about electoral reform for the European Parliament. He did not mention devolution but, as shadow Lord Chancellor Lord Irvine pointed out last year, you can hardly argue for "subsidiarity" in Europe and deny it within the UK.

It has long been our argument that democratic reforms are connected – that one thing leads to another. This is the great tension in Conservative thought: the fear that if you pull at one apparently straggly thread, the whole tapestry will unravel. Intelligent Con-

servatives have always believed, however, that evolutionary reform is needed to head off pressure for destructive and escalating change from building up. We have not reached that point yet; and, as Mr Major pointed out yesterday, "we are not in a position of having a blanket opposition to constitutional change". He has indeed made changes to the workings of the Commons and set up the Grand Committee roadshow of MPs that now tours Scotland and Wales. But these are far too little, too late.

It is now time for the historic divide in the Conservative coalition between the "hedgers" and the (last) "ditchers" to re-open. In 1910, the Tory party split over the power of the Lords to block finance bills. The Tory former prime minister Arthur Balfour described the 1911 Parliament Act, which removed this power, as "the destruction of [the] constitution of this country by revolutionary means". He was wrong, as today Mr Major is wrong to defend the voting rights of hereditary peers, wrong to stop the devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and London and wrong to stand in the way of the people's decision in a referendum on the system for electing the Commons. There could indeed be dramatic changes ahead in the nature and form of democracy in this country and throughout Europe. Most of them are long overdue, and we do not believe that they will be desta-

bilising. On the contrary, we take the evolutionary Tory view that the stability of the past 18 years has been unbalanced, and that a rebalancing of our constitution – at all levels – will produce better but still stable government.

And, if we should end up with a more pluralistic parliament, it would be no bad thing for a separate One Nation Party, perhaps led by Kenneth Clarke, to play a role in our government under its own proud colours, rather than in a state of permanent cringe.

All their own silly fault?

To what extent should we pay to rescue people who court danger for the thrill of it? This recurrent theme of the relationship between the individual and the state is posed again by capsized round-the-world yachtspersons and Richard Branson in his balloon. Mountaineers and mountain-rescue volunteers object to the idea that the former should pay the latter to scrape them off the slopes. And it would seem wrong to undermine the collectivist principle of the coastguard service and voluntary principle of lifeboats. But it is fair to ask whether expensive and commercialised ways of getting your kicks on sea, land and air should be subsidised.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stop snubbing Germany's goodwill

Sir: As a child of refugees from Hitler whose grandmother died in the Holocaust, I am the last to romanticise the Germans. But to compare Kohl in any respect to Hitler, and by implication his predecessors Schmidt, Brandt and Adenauer, is monstrous (letter and picture caption, 4 January).

Why have they, and the vast majority of their electors, been so eager to surrender German sovereignty? So that, in a politically united Germany, Germany will never again be a threat to its neighbours. Even that golden calf, the German mark, will be reluctantly sacrificed to that cause.

There is no nation in Europe with the vast majority of its young generation as anti-nationalist as today's Germans. If a nation that is so large and economically strong remains as an independent state, then it could indeed one day become the cause of conflict. That is one, but not the only good reason, for a European confederation.

I live in a city and work in a cathedral destroyed by German bombs. Hardly was the war over, when civic links were forged with Kiel – similarly destroyed – and later with Dresden, a place of terrible devastation. Young Germans came here to help rebuild. They and their children take it for granted that we, like them, are Europeans. Unlike many of us, they are willing to be outvoted in Europe's institutions. Most of them are instinctively pro-British. But for how much longer?

They are offended and baffled by our jingoism, nourished by many of our politicians and stoked up by much of the press.

Canon PAUL OESTREICHER
Coventry Cathedral

Sir: To Nigel Jones (letter, 4 January) it seems "the absurdity of attempting to yoke together Scots and Sicilians, Swedes and Spaniards is self-evident." Not so in my field of science – theoretical physics. One nation is too small a unit. We yoke ourselves together across Europe for the sake of excellence. Twenty-six groups in 10 countries are currently collaborating on a research project on atomistic computer simulation of complex processes in solids, designed to help European industry keep competitive. Such collaborations have contributed to Europe's leadership in the USA and Japan in my particular field.

Also at stake are opportunities for young scientists to conduct high-quality research instead of being trapped in a multitude of mediocre backwaters. By and large Europe is chaotic with an infinite number of barriers to effective collaboration. The collaboration I belong to is a real achievement, but it is just a tiny drop in an ocean of missed opportunities.

The EU is not to be equated with Europe, true, but in my experience Brussels is the major source of help in spite of its alienating arrogance and bumbling waste. In comparison, the European Science Foundation (covering all Europe) is much more efficient and user-friendly, but it is almost pathetic in the tiny resources it is given.

Finally, at stake is the future peace of Europe. It is obvious that the bonds between peoples are not strong enough to hold us together in the face of any severe tension.

Professor VOLKER HEINE
Cambridge Laboratory
Cambridge



Families lack political backing

Sir: Polly Toynbee's assertion (6 January) that the only useful thing a government can do for families is to wait until they are in danger of collapse and then provide social workers to sort them out is profoundly depressing. There are several more useful things it can do.

It can refrain from promoting the social and economic conditions which breed "disaster families". It can ensure that poor families do not pay proportionately more of their income in taxes than rich ones; it can ensure that if a couple on benefits live together, their joint income is not lower than if they live apart; it can use the tax and benefit systems to alleviate the loss of income and extra costs which child-rearing entails; it can use the maintenance system to ensure that fathers are not financially better off as a result of dumping their wives and children.

In short, a government can recognise that its role in family life need not be solely an authoritarian, punitive one, which comes into effect only when the family has become a "disaster". That route is precisely the one the present government has been following: the results can hardly be described as useful.

JEAN MOLLOY
London SE13

The trauma that follows rape

Sir: I don't know exactly what Dr Thompson read (Letters, 3 January) that I was supposed to have said about rape, but I can assure him that the quotations attributed to me were not true. I did not say, for example, that "long-term psychological disorder is an inevitable consequence of rape". All I said was that when something so traumatic happens you are not the same afterwards as you were before. And I certainly did not make the ridiculous statement that treatment has to be given daily for a year.

My original answers to a TV company's questions had subsequently been taken up by radio and newspapers. The passing on of information by such means can produce considerable distortion.

Professor JOAN FREEMAN
London W7

Jinx strikes the Misery Line

Sir: At 6.25pm on 6 January I was reading my copy of *The Independent* on the northbound platform of Angel tube station in London, waiting for my train home.

When it pulled in and I boarded, I continued reading... the article on the London Underground Northern Line, with its "cranky carriages" grinding to a halt in pitch-black tunnels.

As we pulled out of Highgate station at 6.55, and I finished reading the article... we came to an abrupt halt. One hour later, at 7.55, we finally crawled into East Finchley station (the next stop!) with a garbled message of apology blaming signal problems.

Might I suggest that you warn us next time you publish an article critical of London Underground?

PETER ROSS
London N2

Sir: Nigel Jones is seriously confused about both German and British attitudes towards Europe. No one who understands modern Germans can seriously believe for a moment that there is "... a continuing German drive to dominate Europe", except in the added minds of English Europhobes.

Yes, Germany does tend to dominate Europe at present, but this is inevitable for two reasons. First, the most populous state and largest economy will naturally tend to dominate, no matter what ambitions that state does or does not have; and second, its domination has been happening partly by default, as Europhobic attitudes and policies in this island increasingly lead British views to be ignored and influence to be minimised across the Channel.

Which leads directly to Mr Jones's most serious delusion. Yes indeed, English foreign policy has been to resist European hegemony, at least since the time of Elizabeth I. However, today this means adopting exactly the opposite of the Europhobic position. Withdrawal of Britain from Europe would guarantee the very European hegemony against England that England has rightly feared.

I am sure, as a Scot, that there would be another result of British withdrawal from Europe – the break-up of the United Kingdom. Scots, by and large, do not share English Europhobic attitudes. Scottish independence within the EU would soon follow. You see, Mr Jones, many Scots would rather be yoked with Sicilians than absurd bands of little-Englander Europhobes... even if occasionally one is a renegade Scot like Teddy Taylor.

JIM MANGLES
Worham, Suffolk

Sir: The idea that Britain made war on Hitler to bring its influence to bear upon the Continent ("The Euro-sceptic lie about why we fought Hitler", 2 January) will seem ridiculous to anyone who was grown-up in the 1930s.

We joined the Second World War to stop the nastiest racist dictator from taking over Europe and a great deal of the rest of the world. With help from many others, we succeeded.

At the war cemetery at La Baule, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the raid on St Nazaire, an old retired dockworker came up to me and asked me to "do him the honour" of going to his house and taking a glass of wine.

"Before you fellows came that night", he said, taking my right hand in both of his, "we thought we would never be rescued from the most appalling oppression. Thank you, thank you."

There were tears in his eyes. Mine too. We all knew what that war was about.

It bears no relation to what is happening in Europe today, of course. But the idea that Britain can "maintain its influence" in Europe only by joining in deeper integration with the countries of the Continent is way off-beam too. We have no serious influence in continental Europe to start with. The majority there want us to join in and to do as we are told.

Unfortunately, if we do this we will suffer massive unemployment and severe social divisions. For that is what the economic and social

policies of the EU are already bringing about.

JOHN MAY
Oxshott, Surrey

Sir: As a British citizen living in Belgium since 1967, I have been interested to read coverage on the potential impact of the single European currency. But why never any reference to experience obtained over almost half a century following the 1865 Convention of Paris?

According to the 1910 Baedeker guide to Belgium: "By the Convention of Paris of 1865, Belgium belongs to a monetary league with France, Switzerland, Italy and Greece. One franc, 100 centimes, 80 German pfennigs, 96 Austrian hellers, 48 Dutch cents, 20 American cents and 9¼ pence are all nearly equivalent... The gold and silver coins of France and Switzerland, and the gold coins and 5fr pieces of Italy are also freely accepted [in Belgium]. Other silver coins frequently offered to the unwary visitor should be declined."

The guide goes on to say that English and French banknotes and English gold are accepted in all the principal towns, hotels and railway stations at their full value (1lb = 25 francs).

However, even then the UK was not a member of the Convention; my 1906 Baedeker guidebook to the UK reports: "Foreign money does not circulate in England, and it should always be exchanged upon arrival."

ALAN REEKIE
Brussels

Drink-driving figures mislead

Sir: It was disappointing to see the nation's media fall so readily into the innumerate trap prepared for it by the Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo), in heralding the 18 per cent increase in recorded instances of positive breath tests as evidence of increased drink-driving (report, 3 January, letter, 4 January).

Acpo asserted that it was "unable to supply a figure for the total number of tests performed". It was widely known that testing would be increased this year. If one allows for the increased number of vehicles on the road this year compared with last, then if the number of tests increased by more than 10 per cent or so – which is likely – the incidence of drink-driving has declined again, in line with recent trends. Clearly this is not what Acpo wanted us to hear.

TERRY HERBERT
York

Shops kept warm by air curtains

Sir: David Nowell (letter, 2 January) condemns the fact that retailers appear to be "wasting large amounts of energy" by leaving shop doors open in sub-zero temperatures.

Mr Nowell may not have fully appreciated the major advances in

air separation technology made in recent years. Modern "air curtains" effectively separate the internal and external climates, preventing major heat loss through an open doorway, reducing uncomfortable draughts and, most importantly, making a positive contribution to the overall heating efficiency of the building heating system.

While there are no doubt many thousands of old-technology door heaters still in use, major British retailers have recognised the energy-saving benefits of the new air separation technology and have invested heavily in such equipment.

Mr Nowell may be interested to learn that shops with "open door trading" attract more potential customers than retail outlets where the door is closed. The benefits of air separation systems have also been welcomed by those who operate buildings where continually-opening doors are a necessity – hospitals, clinics, hotels, leisure centres, banks and building societies.

PAUL DONOVAN
Biddle Air Systems
Nuneaton, Warwickshire

Labour pain

Sir: With reference to your articles of 1 and 2 January on Labour Party structure and the letter from Ben Lucas on 4 January, am I alone in thinking that until the general election a period of silence on the part of Mr Lucas and the Labour Co-ordinating Committee would be most welcome?

JOHN F. SPILLAR, MP
(Warley West, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW1

analysis

Suzanne Moore recommends zero tolerance for liberal critics of Tony Blair's support for a US-style clampdown on petty crime, while Jason Bennetto examines whether such tactics by the police actually work

The big issue? Safer streets



Mean streets: a homeless person on the pavement in central London yesterday

Photograph: Jason Bye

So Tony Blair admits he finds King's Cross "actually quite a frightening place for people" and supports the "zero tolerance" policies that are being used experimentally by police in the area. Such a sentiment has been castigated by middle-class liberals who themselves exhibit zero tolerance for anything that appears to their befuddled minds as evidence of a drift rightwards.

Since when, we might ask, did it become right-wing to care about what happens on our streets? Since when is it right-wing to acknowledge that many of us feel unsafe? Since Jack Straw upset everyone with his tirade about squeegee merchants and aggressive beggars, that's when.

Straw may be misguided in trying to out-Howard the hard man himself but to ignore what is going on in our streets as we winchingly hand over our change to teenagers wrapped in cheap sleeping bags is not enough.

Many of those concerned about the erosion of civil liberties that zero tolerance operations may entail do not use the streets much. They are forever encased in their cars. Those who think graffiti is a wonderfully expressive art form are

unlikely to live in areas covered with misspelt racist slogans, nor will they need to use the public phone boxes wallpapered with cards detailing the abilities of a range of young and busty "models".

I don't blame Blair for being frightened of King's Cross. I lived there for more than 10 years and I ended up not so much frightened as depressed by the range of detritus, animal, vegetable and mineral, that litters its streets. There had always been beggars and prostitutes and drugs and the flop houses but there was a sense of community quite unlike anything else I had experienced in London. I liked the street life, there were always so many people around that I felt safe.

"You live in Kings Cross?" strangers would say to me. "I'm so sorry." But I wasn't sorry at all. I loved it. Then things changed. Or I changed.

A new set of Italian heroin dealers moved in, shortly followed by crack dealers. At residents' meetings the police would explain that they were actually decreasing the number of officers on the streets. It was difficult not to believe in some conspiracy theory which involved all the drugs and prostitution in London being deliberately contained in certain

designated areas, Kings Cross being one of them.

My children found used syringes, and abandoned condoms on the stairs of my block of flats. At my daughter's school, some kids retrieving a football stumbled upon four or five guys shooting up behind the wall. Nothing was sacred any more. Children's pushchairs would be stolen, gold chains

If we are afraid of the streets, then one of our biggest civil liberties has already been lost

snatched from the neck of the Asian woman shopkeeper.

Doors would be kicked in for the sake of a second-hand portable TV. Tattooed girls who could barely keep their eyes open would approach punters in broad daylight and abuse them if their services were not required. Even the winos who barked in to the night started pushing little bags of heroin on a sale-or-return basis. The

dealer across the road from me was finally busted after a shootout with the police.

I received a questionnaire from Camden council asking whether I used the local amenities. Did they mean that stinky little patch of grass which was full of dogshit and drunken Glaswegians? No, I didn't take my children for picnics there actually.

Now none of this was life-threatening. Many people live in far worse circumstances but all I know is that it gets you down. Petty crime may be petty but you can still feel imprisoned by it. The old ladies on my block were terrified to walk around at all and no amount of statistics about how their fear of crime was out of proportion to the likelihood of anything happening to them would help them.

They were afraid. I was afraid for my children. I wouldn't let them play on the streets and I believe that children like adults should play on the streets.

Of course we should be intolerant of homelessness, not the homeless and we should be aware that zero tolerance policies have to mean more than a form of street cleansing. But to accuse Blair of pandering to voters on this whole issue misses the point. Public

space is a battleground and all this talk of community is a fantasy if we do not feel we own the spaces we share. It is in no one's interest to further criminalise the homeless. Shifting the new undesirable up the road a bit is a short-term solution. But there is more to it than that.

If zero tolerance campaigns seem almost entirely negative by inhibiting how we behave on the streets, there are also positive steps to be taken to repopulate those streets. There is

safety in numbers, as any woman knows. We also know who it is we are afraid of.

Rather than curfews to make us feel safer I would like to see a change in licensing laws so that the 24-hour city can become more than an idea. One feels safer walking in the early hours among the hordes of cappuccino drinkers on Soho pavements than on any deserted street.

Anyone, whether a charming beggar or aggressive *Big Issue* seller, is also less frightening if there are others around.

Zero tolerance policies fall down when they fail to distinguish between different forms of street life. We do not need the purging of buskers, except that man at Finsbury Park who has never been able to sing, in order to feel safe.

Feeling safe is the key. Some police officers will even admit that the kind of modern policing that seeks consumer satisfaction is more interested in making us feel safe than ensuring that we actually are safe.

I moved out of King's Cross in the end to an area that has as many problems and as much crime. Drugs and prostitution are just round the corner rather than on my doorstep and I like it better that way.

I do not want to live under siege any more than I want to live in Singapore. I want the streets to be full, not empty, street life to be richer, not poorer. Those concerned with civil liberties must recognise that as long as we are afraid of the streets themselves then one of our biggest freedoms has already been lost. While they are at it they might also like to consider whose liberty they are protecting - the right of people to terrorise public space or the right of the rest of us simply to inhabit it? SM

The "zero tolerance" approach to crime - in which any misdemeanour, however minor, is stamped upon by the police - has gained a new disciple, Tony Blair. He has joined a bandwagon whose passengers already include John Major, the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, and his Labour shadow, Jack Straw. They all appear to believe that one of the modern panaceas of crime is to pour large numbers of foot patrol officers into a "problem area" and ensure all laws are enforced.

They argue that by clamping down on "minor" crime and nuisance - begging and abusive drunks, cyclists riding on the pavement, litter louts - many of the more serious offences and offenders will be eliminated.

The enthusiasm for zero tolerance comes from its apparent successful introduction into New York's crime-ridden streets, and a pilot scheme in London's seedy Kings Cross.

However, closer examination shows the scheme may be more about feelgood policing than about stopping serious crime.

Zero tolerance was greatly influenced by the criminologists James Wilson and George Kelling, whose 1982 article, *Broken Windows*, argued that leaving a broken window unrepaired would encourage vandals to wreck the rest.

The theory was put to the test in New York about three years ago. Under the direction of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and his former police commissioner, William Bratton, the city's police made a priority of cracking down on "quality of life crimes", such as graffiti and begging.

British politicians and police officers have flocked to New York to admire the results. A week ago Mayor Giuliani

announced that a city once notorious for its violence now ranks 144th on the FBI's comparison of crime in America's 189 largest cities. The city's murder total last year fell below 1,000 for the first time in nearly 30 years. The total is now less than half the figure recorded in 1990. Theft and burglary have also dropped.

But many criminologists believe other, more influential factors are responsible for the city's change of fortune. There has been a demographic shift in the American population, with fewer young males, the group

most prone to violent crime. The turf wars between rival drug gangs are considered to have stabilised and many of the more bloodthirsty offenders are now behind bars.

Evidence that this is a national trend is shown by the fact that about 125 American cities have seen dramatic falls in murder rates.

But how does this approach translate to Britain, which is not yet overrun by drugs and guns? In the six-week-long Kings Cross experiment, an extra 20 to 25 police officers were redeployed to provide 24-hour, high-profile foot patrols. They were given strict instructions not to tolerate any law breakers or threatening actions. This included aggressive drunks, pushy beggars, people throwing

litter, and drug users. At any one time there were 20 to 40 officers working the patch.

The flurry of arrests slowed to a trickle after a few days. But police believe the crime rate, for both small and big offences, dropped significantly during the period because of their tactics. Furthermore, they say, two neighbouring police areas did not suffer an upsurge in offences from displaced miscreants. Residents were also happy with the results.

So zero tolerance is a big success? Not necessarily. Scotland Yard admits that keeping so many officers on patrol would eventually affect other services and could not be sustained for long without extra resources.

With police forces throughout Britain struggling to make ends meet, they do not have the spare cash to lavish on hordes of extra beat bobbies.

It is also too early to tell whether the Kings Cross scheme has reduced crime permanently. And with violent crimes rising by 10 per cent to 331,300 in England and Wales last year, the public may feel there are other priorities.

Chief constables recognise these dilemmas, and Scotland Yard appears to acknowledge that one of the most important benefits from the pilot scheme was the feelgood factor.

As a Metropolitan Police spokesman acknowledged: "By maintaining a higher police presence [in Kings Cross] we are reassuring the public and reducing the fear of crime. The idea was to tackle [that] fear."

In an ideal world the police would make big cuts in the level of crime, as well as making the public feel safe. Though it undoubtedly makes good political sense to sweep troublemakers off the streets, it may be a luxury we cannot afford. JB

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Eddie from Bracknell, voice of democracy

"It's Eddie on the line from Bracknell here. I don't normally phone in to these programmes, but I'd just like to say that I've been listening to your guest and I think he is absolutely wrong. I don't think proportional representation or the single transferable vote would be a threat to democracy, and shall I tell you why? I'll tell you why. Because we haven't got democracy here, that's why. All we have is a chance, once every five years, to choose between two similar packs of plausible rogues, no, hear me out, what I mean is, true, in fact, I wouldn't even say they were very plausible, you take Dr Brian Mawhinney for example. I don't know why he calls himself a doctor, if I saw him leaning over me at the scene of a road accident I'd get such a fright I'd agree to be treated by Old Ma Whinney, but I suppose because a doctor helps you to get a parking space in Belfast, where was I? Democracy, yes, to come to the point, I think people in this country are starved of democracy, of having any say in the way they are governed, and that's why they want a bit of constitutional reform, the Labour Party and Lib Dems are absolutely right here, we all feel (except the Tories) that the way things are run at the moment is not right and things have got to be changed, so when John

man without blushing say that the Tories have done marvels for the railways when for years all they have ever done is starve them of cash or sell them off cheap and either way undermine them? Doctored the truth, that's the only kind of doctoring Mr Brian Mawhinney has ever got up to, mark you, they seem to go in for fake doctors a lot in Northern Ireland, what's that other plausible rogue? Dr so-called Ian Paisley, that's the fellow, I tell you if I saw him leaning over me at the scene of a road accident I'd get such a fright I'd agree to be treated by Old Ma Whinney, but I suppose because a doctor helps you to get a parking space in Belfast, where was I? Democracy, yes, to come to the point, I think people in this country are starved of democracy, of having any say in the way they are governed, and that's why they want a bit of constitutional reform, the Labour Party and Lib Dems are absolutely right here, we all feel (except the Tories) that the way things are run at the moment is not right and things have got to be changed, so when John



Miles Kington

Major gets on his high horse and says it will all end in tears and lead to the breakup of Great Britain, he's talking through his hat, we're just asking him to consider improving a desperate situation, though it's funny to see him facing both ways, I mean, when it comes to the UK he is adamant that we must keep the union going at all costs but when it comes to the EU he seems hell-bent on obstructing it and hampering its workings, come on make your mind up John Major! Are you helping or

hinder? Are you the personality of the year? Are you, my foot! No, all I wanted to say was that the people of this country are so starved of democracy, real democracy, that they pay good money to pretend to have democracy! What am I talking about? I'll tell you what I'm talking about, I'm talking about phone-in democracy, that's what I'm talking about, you only have to switch on TV to see notices saying: "Do you think Michael Atherton is doing a good job as England captain? Ring in with your YES or NO vote now!" or "Who do you think is man of the match? Register your vote now!" See what I'm getting at? We're so starved of real democracy that people are prepared to lash out money on phone calls to register a vote that doesn't mean anything, just to get a feeling of participation. That's why programmes like *Any Questions* have turned into boring party political programmes, which they never used to be, and why Dimbleby says now and again, "Well, this isn't strictly a democratically significant exercise, but it would be

interesting to see how many people in this hall think that the queen should be abolished, so just raise your hands if you think she should be." Of course it's statistically meaningless, but emotionally Dimbleby has got it right because it does give people a momentary feeling of participation which they never get normally, so what I am getting at is that we have turned into a phoney, phone-in democracy, where a phone vote is the nearest most people ever get to a vote, no, hang on, I'm almost finished now, I just want to say that I am as bad as anyone because I have hogged this whole conversation through just ringing in, but I am convinced that if I didn't have this outlet for my opinions I might run amok with a machete or blow my savings on the National Lottery, so maybe phone-ins do have their own validity until such time as real democracy comes along, that's what I think anyway...

Well, do you think Eddie is right? Phone NOW to register your vote for either YES or NO.

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Let's root out the rot in our sickly constitution

Richard North is the latest in a long line of commentators to have discerned the true virtue of the British Constitution. It is that it works. Critics, he argued in his three articles on these pages last week, have misunderstood the basic rationale of our system – which is not rule by the people, but strong government. The Constitution should indeed “appal any democrat who believes in rule by and for the people”, since its purpose is quite different. For it is “a system for selecting and controlling a governing elite (the parliamentarians)” and in doing this, it succeeds in eliminating the “serious danger of direct democracy”.

Defenders of the Constitution should, however, ask themselves why what was once a model so widely admired has now become a warning of what to avoid. In the Fifties and Sixties, the Westminster model was the paradigm of democracy, adopted in much of Africa and Asia. Today, none of the new democracies of central and eastern Europe has for one moment contemplated adopting the British system. None believes that an omniscient government, elected by the largest minority, yields a regime that is either effective or fair. All of them, therefore, have codified constitutions with judicial review; none uses the first-past-the-post electoral system; most have adopted one of the varieties of proportional representation.

For even in its own terms, the British Constitution fails. If the purpose of an election is to select a governing elite, it has not performed this function very well in recent years. The last three general elections have produced governments with working majorities in the House of Commons. Two of these governments – in 1983 and 1987 – enjoyed landslide majorities of more than 100. All three, however, rested on just 42 per cent of the vote. Can a government, however large a majority it enjoys in the Commons, be effective when it is in so much of a minority in the country?

In 1923, in an endeavour to secure a single-party majority, Mussolini amended the Italian electoral law so that the winning party would automatically receive two-thirds of the seats. That is electoral gerrymandering of a kind that we in Britain would never countenance. But we do not need to. For in 1983, the British electoral system gave Margaret Thatcher nearly two-thirds of the seats in the House of Commons for just 42 per cent of the vote. She achieved a massive parliamentary majority, although she was in a minority of more than four and a half million of the popular vote. How, in a democracy, can a government be strong when nearly three-fifths of the voters are against it?

The electoral system, moreover, discriminates even against the two major parties in areas where they are weak. Labour, in 1992, won only 10 seats in the South-east of England outside Greater London. The Conservatives, despite their electoral victory, won only five of the 54 constituencies in the major conurbations of Birmingham, Bradford, Glasgow, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield. No wonder conservative MPs sometimes find it difficult to comprehend the prob-



Vernon Bogdanor

Reformers must do more than shift power among oligarchs. We need to have real, direct democratic processes

lems of the inner cities. Our electoral system gives us not majority government, but government by the largest minority. Our constitution then allows that minority to govern, untrammelled by checks upon its power. Almost alone among democracies, we have no codified constitution, no judicial review of legislation, no federal system, a weak structure of local government, and a feeble second chamber.

Richard North defends the House of Lords by saying that it is “wiser than most of us”. That would also be the opinion of most of their lordships. It is not, however, one that can be sustained by any dispassionate observer of the Lords proceedings.

In March 1994, the Lords rejected Lord Diamond's Bill allowing the first-born, whether male or female, to inherit a peerage. Lords Mowbray and Stourton objected since the eldest daughter of an ancient house “might marry, shall we say, an American film star from Hollywood”. Even more “appalling” would be “if a daughter were to marry a Frenchman and the family became French.” The Earl of Shrewsbury warned his fellow-peers not to tamper with “a system which has been with us since before the Norman Conquest”, while the Earl of Strathfield felt that their lordships were in danger of moving too fast. There is probably more wisdom to be found in a random sample from the local pub than there is in the House of Lords.

The inadequacy of the second chamber makes possible omniscient government. Such a government can, as Richard North notices, be checked by riot, as with the poll tax. Riot, however, is scarcely a constitutional mechanism.

The poll tax is indeed a graphic example of what happens when politicians ignore the people. Today, constitutional reform needs to go well beyond Richard North's elitist system. The widespread disillusionment with politicians and the increase in support for constitutional change, displayed in numerous opinion polls, has occurred precisely because our political system frustrates the desires of voters to participate in decisions that affect them. Constitutional reformers must do more than simply shift power among the oligarchs who aspire to rule us, which means a much greater emphasis on the instruments of direct democracy – not only referendums, but citizens' juries, people's parliaments and other innovations that technological advances have made possible.

The successful working of the British Constitution rested on contingent factors – it presupposes a deferential and homogeneous society divided by class. In such a society, most voters will find themselves in effect represented by just two parties, one broadly social democratic, the other broadly capitalist; and they will be happy for politicians to take decisions on their behalf. A society of this kind existed between the 1940s and the Seventies, but it has now passed away. Our political system thus needs to be refashioned to meet the needs of a new society. The point then today is not to reinterpret the British Constitution, but to change it.

Come quietly, please, Mr Milosevic

Will the embattled Serbian leader heed the ringing of demonstrators' alarm clocks – or exit on a tide of violence, asks Steve Crawshaw

Yesterday was Christmas Day in Serbia, where the Orthodox Church uses the Julian calendar. If the Serbs are lucky, their real Christmas gift is on its way.

The thousands of alarm clocks that demonstrators sounded in the streets of Belgrade on New Year's Eve sent a message as clear as it was concise: Slobodan Milosevic, your time is up. Peacefully or with violence – that is still unclear.

Ten years and three wars after he first used demagoguery and nationalism to come to power, the Serbian leader is embattled as never before. The sustained protests of the past two months, demanding the acknowledgement of opposition victories in elections in November, have put the regime under unprecedented pressure. Crucially, we are now seeing the knock-on effects of those demonstrations: new rifts in the structure of the establishment itself.

Those who once loyally supported the regime are eager to distance themselves from the man who bears much responsibility for the deaths of others, and who now himself faces the prospect of political sudden death. The demonstrators talk of their “velvet revolution” – a wistful looking back to what the demonstrators achieved in Prague in 1989. But the latest cracks, as revealed this week, are a reminder that the collapse of the regime may owe as much to Romania as it does to Czechoslovakia.

Even before the New Year, some officers had expressed anonymous solidarity with the demonstrators. Last week, the Orthodox Church, once fiercely nationalist, sharply condemned the regime. Now, in a remarkable twist, some in the Serbian military have declared themselves ready to use firepower against Mr Milosevic, if the Serbian leader tries to use force to suppress the protests. That raises the spectre of Romanian-style bloodshed, when the army and Nicolae Ceausescu's hated Securitate forces battled it out in the streets of Bucharest in December 1989.

The army appears to have realised what Mr Milosevic may perhaps not yet have acknowledged: that, for the first time in his political life, he has nowhere to turn. The pattern was set in the rest of east Europe, seven years ago. Hard and soft alike, the regimes collapsed. When they offered concessions – as the Serbian government has done in recent days, by offering limited recognition of opposition election victories – demonstrators became emboldened to ask for more. And when the authorities clamped down – by threatening a massacre (in Leipzig) or just by beating people up (in Prague), that enraged even those who until then had stayed at home making dinner or

watching TV, unmoved by the dramas on the streets.

If he unleashes bloodshed, Mr Milosevic may even learn the lesson that Ceausescu learnt on an icy Christmas Day: that those who live by the gun do indeed sometimes die by the gun.

Even if Mr Milosevic resigns tomorrow, his departure would be lethally late. Because of the nationalism that the Serbian leader unleashed (abetted at one remove by his Croatian shadow, President Franjo Tudjman) hundreds of thousands of innocent people lost their homes, their families, their lives. The wars in Yugoslavia took place to ensure Mr Milosevic's own continued hold on power, threatened by the multi-party elections in Yugoslavia that immediately followed the upheavals of 1989.

And yet, with the conclusion of the Dayton peace accord, Mr Milosevic has repeatedly been

praised by the West for his contribution to peace and even “stability” in Bosnia today. It is as if a crazed gangster who dispatched killer thugs to the other houses in his street were to be praised for helping the police with their inquiries – once most of the people in the street were already dead.

There are important differences between Belgrade in 1997 and Leipzig, Prague or Bucharest in 1989. The Serbian regime, sustained by poisonous television propaganda, is not universally loathed and feared (just as, we should remember, Hitler was not hated by ordinary Germans). A small and outspoken opposition press has long been tolerated in Belgrade – because only a tiny minority cared enough to read it.

Even now, Mr Milosevic might pull one last bloodstained rabbit out of the hat to neutralise the opposition and save his political skin – if, for

example, he unleashes yet another conflict, in the Albanian-majority province of Kosovo where nationalism first helped him to power. The tensions in Kosovo, where Albanians have been stripped of basic rights, have repeatedly exploded in recent years. Serbs see Kosovo as their historic “heartland”; they would be happy if the Albanians were not there at all. With enough encouragement from Belgrade, the tensions might be persuaded to explode, once more.

The demonstrations that have filled the streets of Belgrade for the past seven weeks have not yet gained the Prague-

style momentum – where the numbers doubled, tripled, and multiplied tenfold as the days went by – that would make the early collapse of the Serbian regime inevitable. Importantly, however, the elephant's hide has been pierced. In the past, Mr Milosevic has reacted calmly, almost dismissively, to protests on the street. This time, things have been different. He has tried, and failed, to mount counter-demonstrations; and his government has even admitted to losing a few elections.

Even now, there is no brave new Serbian world around the corner. The alarm clocks in Belgrade were a conscious throwback to the little bells Czechs rang in Wenceslas Square in November 1989, as a get-out-of-here message to the regime. But Serbia is not Czechoslovakia, not by a long way. Above all, it has no Vaclav Havel to lead it into a democratic future. The sanest of Serbia's three main opposition leaders, Vesna Pestic, is the one with least popular support. The other two, Vuk Draskovic and Zoran Djindjic, are still tainted by the nationalism of recent years. Mr Draskovic's own party has had a clearly nationalist tinge in past years (the leopard insists he has changed his spots). Mr Djindjic was happy to fraternise with Radovan Karadzic, during the war in Bosnia.

After 1945, it took years for most ordinary Germans to accept the monstrosity of what their country and countrymen had done. Equally, it will take years for Serbia – which still sees itself as almost guilt-free – to come to terms with what Serbs have done. In Srebrenica and elsewhere. But by acknowledging the horror of the past, Serbia would not diminish itself. On the contrary, as the German example has shown, such admissions could provide the foundation for a self-confident and honest Serbia; one that would no longer be a menace to its neighbours.

For now, even ordinary Serbs remain mistrustful, still seeing themselves as victims. Like millions of Russians, they forget that they, too, actively or passively helped an evil regime to flourish. One day, though, self-awareness may come to Serbia. And Western politicians and Serbs alike might understand that the true interests of Serbia are not identical with the murderous nationalism, incited by Slobodan Milosevic, which has maimed his country and destroyed the reputation of its people.



Lois's undie-achiever

Ann Treneman on how marriage changed Superman

Since Superman got married three months ago, things have not been very super at all. His powers have been on the wane and the Man of Steel has been seen wearing oven mitts in the kitchen. He has been known to be too tired to do much of anything in the evenings.

So far, so familiar for any new men struggling to save the world for truth and justice and whip up that memorable soufflé. But just when Lois was about to break him in and get him cleaning the work surfaces, he has a super-sized mid-life crisis.

This requires a new image, so out goes the cape and the trusty underpants and in comes a skin-tight bodysuit decorated with lightning bolts (described by some as “the Linford Christie look”). As of March, he will zap instead of fly. Lois March, he will zap instead of fly. Lois March, he will zap instead of fly. Lois March, he will zap instead of fly.

To make matters worse, he is in denial. He claims that he has to wear this new suit for health reasons and refuses to admit it is an elaborate ruse to ditch his new man responsibilities. It was time to get real. Surely Mike Carlin, the executive editor at DC Comics in New York, would reveal the truth behind our hero's comic-book makeover.

Mr Carlin, who describes himself as “The Great Carlini”, is 100 per cent behind the suit excuse. “Superman is getting a new suit because his powers have changed and he has become a being of energy and he is dispersing. Now if you've ever dispersed, you know how painful that can be, and he



really does need his new suit to contain himself. I mean it's not like he just felt like changing his clothes – it's a do-or-die situation.”

What about Lois? “This has nothing to do with his marriage except that Lois Lane married him for better and for worse and now she has to be there for the ‘for worse’ part,” he says. “She will do whatever she can to help him get his powers back. Right now, that entails standing behind the idea of wearing this new suit to keep himself solid.”

You see how it has all been twisted so Lois has to do a Tammy Wynette and Stand By Her Man. Will Superman still make the odd casserole, at least? “Well, if he is around long enough and not saving a busload of orphans or something, yes. He is going to be a superhusband, which is what every woman wishes she had.”

Carlini refused to be drawn on the Linford angle. Underpants and fertility do have a link, after all. Could a superbaby be in the plot? He scoffed, but admitted: “Yeah, I know how it looks, but that has nothing to do with the storyline.”

Then he came up with a family values quote that would appeal to John Major, another man who has been seen with his underpants showing. “Look, if we can get new younger readers to try Superman, then they'll see the morals that stand behind what he is. After all, it doesn't matter what kind of costume you wear. It's what is inside that counts.”

An end to dieting? Fat chance

We are only days into the New Year – and guess what? There is a revolutionary new way to slim (isn't that what someone said this time last year?). No, listen, it's fantastic – no need to count calories – all you need to do is eat six boiled eggs with half a grapefruit every half an hour for two hours before you get out of bed ... and after that, all you need to do is ...

Now correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought we were in a totally new era. Aren't we now in post-dieting times, when it's fat to be fat – even though it might actually kill you? But let's not worry about that. What matters is that instead of counting calories, we are keeping the cash registers ringing with our panic-buying of the latest “non-diet” books, desperately hoping that between the lines lies the secret of a 22-inch waist. Thus we can feel we can keep up with the trends, deny the guilt surrounding our obsessions, accept our rolls of fat – and be happy.

Wrong. The only people who are happy are the publishers of the new craze for “thinness-free, non-dieting” diet books, the advertisers and the dieting industry.

The growing fab-to-be-fat brigade has come on the back of saturation coverage of the “norm” of superthin models such as Jodie Kidd (above). One extreme has simply followed another. It's an exhausting roller-coaster of yearly

exploitation and capitalisation – in which the only losers are us.

So, what we need is a post-post dieting era. (A bit like post-post modernism, but with more calories!) And we need it to start now – before we die from being overweight, or become terminally depressed trying to accept our unacceptable adipose. We need the pendulum to take another dramatic swing – to the middle. In this new era, it will be good and positive to be slim – but by permanently giving up the guilt-ridden, desperate cycle of starving and bingeing. It will be good to eat healthy, nourishing food and still lose weight. It will be good to enjoy Christmas without the compulsory trough-out. It will be good to start 1998 and not need the Revolutionary New Diet when “all you need to do is ... etc” (yawn). It will be good, because it will be possible.

And it will be possible when we stop being victims, and learn to trust ourselves. It will be possible when we take responsibility for our eating habits, which we are genuinely prepared to change – permanently – and take control of our lives, and of what we do and don't put in our mouths – and others' pockets. Then next January we could genuinely say “Happy New Year”.



Helen Bailey

Good-bye battery



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Marjorie Scardino: 'Have a plan, execute it violently and do it today'

Matthew Horsman
Media Editor

Pearson's new chief signals her intent as executives prepare for the advent of a rigorous regime

Pearson's new chief executive, who begins the high-profile job today, has taken to heart the advice of US General Douglas MacArthur: have a good plan, execute it violently, and do it today. Marjorie Scardino said the line was mentioned to her by a colleague and seemed to sum up her strategy at the media and financial services conglomerate, which is under City pressure to restructure its vast array of assets.

The motto is a measure of Ms

Scardino's intention to shake up the sleepy giant, which has attracted criticism in the City because of what analysts call a lack of focus.

"Just wait until she gets into the job," a senior colleague warned. "She is going to shake a lot of people up."

Known as the Economist Group, where she was chief executive, as a hands-on, "intuitive" manager, Ms Scardino is expected to move quickly to prove herself. City analysts and

leading institutional shareholders have said she will be given the benefit of the doubt, at least for six months. "Have I really got as long as that?" Ms Scardino joked.

On her first day, she has planned a series of meetings with division heads, starting at 9.30am. "I hate the idea of going in without meeting everybody properly," she said.

Later this month, she is planning to visit the New York headquarters, where she will meet senior manag-

ment from Pearson subsidiaries. Later in the year, she intends to talk to leading financial institutions and analysts.

"I think we made a mistake back when my appointment was announced [in October]," Ms Scardino said. "We should have met all the City people then, because I think they like to look you in the eye."

An early target of her attention is likely to be Mindscape, the ill-starred CD-Rom manufacturer pri-

marily responsible for Pearson's bad press during the past year and a contributing factor to the early retirement of Frank Barlow, the outgoing managing director. Most analysts expect Pearson to sell the company rather than try to turn it around.

Also on a list of options is the sale of the company's theme park division, led by Madame Tussaud's, and its half share in the Lazard merchant banking operation.

Some analysts even expect Ms

Scardino to spin off the television subsidiary, or even sell it outright. That would please Greg Dyke, the chief executive of Pearson Television, who is believed to be in favour of a sale.

More broadly, she is expected to encourage different subsidiaries - ranging from books to television to financial information - to work more closely together. She has declined to comment on the options, saying only that she has ruled nothing out.

Ms Scardino, born and raised in

the US, is widely being seen, both inside and outside the company, as a new broom.

Unlike past Pearson senior management, she eschews ceremony, dislikes pomp and is decidedly down to earth in an unmistakably American way.

That approach may make some of Pearson's staff uncomfortable, insiders warned. At the *Financial Times*, for instance, there are growing fears that Ms Scardino's appointment could lead to further job cuts and changes to the operational structure of the newspaper.

Bids create £300m fee bonanza for lawyers

Jill Treanor
Banking Correspondent

City law firms reaped rich rewards from last year's boom in takeover activity by scooping a record £300m in fees, a 50 per cent increase from 1995.

This upturn in business has led to an explosion in vacancies at law firms, driving salaries higher and boosting the earnings of partners at the firms.

"I would have expected partners to have had one of their best years for quite a number of years," said David Woolson, recruitment consultant at Chambers, a leading firm of recruitment experts for lawyers.

The legal data compiled by *Acquisitions Monthly* follow calculations by Philip Healey, editor of the magazine, that total fees paid out for mergers and acquisitions in the UK reached a record £1.1bn in 1996. This figure includes fees paid to investment bankers, lawyers, accountants and public relations advisers.

Last year created a good environment for mergers because the stock market soared and interest rates were low. This makes deals less earnings-dilutive for the buyer.

Deals were also driven by expectations that a Labour government would be elected this year and alter taxation and competition policy.

In 1997, City lawyers expect business to remain brisk, al-

though Nigel Boardman, partner at Slaughter & May, which was ranked second in *Acquisitions Monthly*'s tables, thinks the election may lead to a slowdown in activity during 1997.

The rankings are based on the value of mergers between UK firms on which the law firms advised, rather than the number of deals.

Slaughter & May advised on 25 deals, the largest number, but was second in the table because their value amounted to £16.26bn.

Linklaters & Paines took first place by advising on 19 deals worth £19.02bn. It advised on a number of £1bn-plus deals such as Royal Insurance's £2.4bn merger with Sun Alliance, and ousted Freshfields, the City firm run by Anthony

Salz, a mergers and acquisitions specialist, from the top slot.

Freshfields fell to third with 17 deals worth £9.46bn. Barry O'Brien, head of corporate finance at Freshfields, said: "We are not surprised by our position in these tables since we started the year by being conflicted out of both sides of the £3.6bn Granada-Forte bid."

"Perhaps more importantly, we have also advised on over £16bn of US-UK mergers, such as Premier-Farnell and BT-MCI, which did not even qualify for the tables [because they took place outside the UK]."

While the mergers during 1996 were not as large as in previous years, they were more complex, which helped generate higher fees for the law firms involved.

Top legal advisers for UK public takeovers		
Legal adviser	No of deals	Value £m
1 Linklaters & Paines (3)	19	19,016
2 Slaughter & May (2)	25	16,260
3 Freshfields (1)	17	9,457
4 Ashurst Morris Crisp (13)	15	8,986
5 Allen & Overy (8)	15	8,768
6 Herbert Smith (4)	17	6,258
7 Macfarlanes (14)	7	5,976
8 Lovell White Durrant (6)	5	5,667
9 Clifford Chance (5)	15	4,595
10 Denton Hall (11)	2	3,688

Numbers in brackets refer to league position last year. Source: *Acquisitions Monthly*

"The increasing complexity of deals meant that last year was even better than 1995 in terms of boosting the coffers of leading law firms," said Mr Healey.

Mr Boardman of Slaughter & May said: "There were fewer mega-deals in 1996 but a larger level of overall activity. It's been an active year. It's been a good year."

He now expects continued activity in sectors where further consolidation is needed, such as engineering and financial services, but said changes to competition policy after the election could slow down such consolidation.

A number of bids between engineering companies are already under way, such as Triplex Lloyd's offer for William Cook. FKI's bid for Newman Tonks and Fairley's move for Burnfield.

In other sectors, Gulf Canada is bidding for Clyde Petroleum and Ashbury is chasing UK Estates.

Anthony Cann, head of the corporate department at Linklaters & Paines, expects the healthy start to the year to continue even though the general election later this year may lead to a pause in domestic business. Outside the UK, he predicts that merger business will soar.

Law firms do not publish profit figures but recent research by *Legal Business*, a specialist magazine, confirms that 1996 was one of the best for firms in recent years.



Toppled: Freshfields, run by Anthony Salz, has lost its top slot in the merger tables

Sky and cable in fresh skirmish

Matthew Horsman

Fresh hostilities have erupted in the long-simmering battle between BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster, and UK cable operators, with each side accusing the other of spreading disinformation and misleading customers.

Complaints by International CableTel and one other operator have been deposited with the Independent Television Commission, accusing BSkyB of a "dirty tricks" campaign aimed at convincing customers to switch to satellite. One BSkyB tactic, the cable operators complained, was to suggest that cable customers risked having channels dropped without warning in the future. The satellite broadcaster is also accused of unfairly comparing prices between the rival services.

BSkyB has responded with similar charges, accusing cable operators of spreading misleading information about the Sky multichannel package. For instance, some customers have allegedly been told they will no longer receive BSkyB's analogue service of more than 40 channels once the new digital package is introduced at the end of the year. In fact, BSkyB has promised to broadcast in analogue and digital for the foreseeable future.

The ITC has written to all UK cable operators, asking them to respond to BSkyB's charges by 24 January.

The intervention by the TV regulator follows a long-running campaign by cable companies to force action against what they view as anti-competitive behaviour by BSkyB. But a six-month inquiry by the Office of Fair Trading controversially cleared the company of the charge in June. Since then, a new rate card establishing the terms and prices of BSkyB's supply of pay-TV programming to the cable industry has been introduced. Cable operators said the rate card, which sets the price of popular Sky programmes such as films and sport, was still unfair, and have threatened the OFT with judicial review and an appeal to Brussels.

The appeal to the ITC by International CableTel was dismissed by BSkyB. A senior source said it was a further example of "whingeing" by cable operators.

BA link-up faces tough US curbs

Chris Godsmark
and Michael Harrison

Two big players in the US airline industry served notice yesterday that they would insist on Washington imposing harsher conditions on the transatlantic alliance between British Airways and American Airlines than those proposed by US authorities.

United Airlines, the world's biggest carrier, is to urge US regulators to block some of the most lucrative benefits of the tie-up while Delta Air Lines said it was confident that the two airlines would face tougher curbs to gain approval on ticket prices, would be blocked.

United insisted the extra conditions were perfectly reasonable. Similar terms had been attached to the 1995 deal with Lufthansa on overlapping routes with United between Frankfurt and Chicago and New York.

Mike Whittaker, United's director of international affairs, said: "In previous cases US competition authorities have been concerned that where two carriers have hub airports at both ends of a route they will use their market dominance to raise prices, particularly for business travellers."

Both Delta and United also said they were opposed to the idea of BA being allowed to sell the slots, a move which could net it up to £180m.

On four routes from London where BA and AA would enjoy a total or near monopoly - to Dallas, Miami, Chicago and New York's John F Kennedy airport - United will ask the US Justice and Transportation departments to limit the alliance solely to code-sharing, where passengers travel between airlines using the same flight code. Other benefits, including the pooling of revenues, facilities and collaboration on ticket prices, would be blocked.

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Surge in exports lifts British car output

Michael Harrison

The British motor industry exported more cars than it sold at home last year for the first time in its history. However, the industry's trade balance remained in the red as imported cars took 62 per cent of the 2,025,450 new cars sold in 1996.

According to figures released yesterday by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, 54 per cent of the 1.65 million cars built in Britain last year were exported, mainly to continental Europe, compared with 48 per cent in 1995 when production reached 1.53 million. Production is forecast to exceed 1.7 million this year.

The surge in exports, fuelled by increasing production at the three Japanese transplant factories in Britain, helped lift total car output to its highest level since 1973. At the same time, official SMMT figures showed that the new car market broke back through the 2 million mark for the first time since 1990. The total of 2,025 million was 4 per cent up on 1995 and the third-highest on record.

Ernie Thompson, the SMMT's chief executive, forecast that sales would rise by a further 25,000-50,000 this year despite possible jitters among private buyers in the run-up to the general election. By 2000 the SMMT is forecasting sales of 2.2

million and annual production of 2 million, enabling the industry to wipe out its long-standing trade deficit.

In 1995 the industry was in the red to the tune of about £5bn. The rise in output will be partly driven by increased production from Toyota, Nissan and Honda. Toyota, for instance, will start production of a second mid-sized Corolla model next year at its Burnaston plant in Derbyshire.

However, British manufacturers are also gearing up to raise production with Jaguar launching the X200 model from Coventry and Rover preparing to start manufacture of a new small Land Rover, code-named the

CB40, at Solihull.

The sharp rise in imports from 59 per cent of sales in 1995 to 62 per cent was driven by strong sales to private buyers of models such as the Fiat Bravo and Punto, the Megane and Clio from Renault and the Volkswagen Polo.

The three European manufacturers all increased their market share last year at the expense of UK-based manufacturers. Ford's market share slipped below 20 per cent for the first time since 1971 while Vauxhall's share fell from 15 to 14 per cent and Rover's from 12 to 11 per cent.

The SMMT expects the importers' share of the market to remain above 60 per cent this

year. However, it said that export production was increasing at twice the rate that imports were rising, meaning an overall reduction in the trade deficit.

Last year Britain shipped about 890,000 cars overseas and imported 1.26 million cars. This year imports are expected to rise slightly to 1.38 million while exports are forecast to remain around the same level.

Separately, the SMMT said it would press the next government, Conservative or Labour, to introduce financial incentives for car owners to scrap old, environmentally unfriendly models and trade them in for new cars.

Comment, page 15

Generators prepare for peak demand tonight

Michael Harrison

Electricity consumption is forecast to hit an all-time high at 53,000 tonight but power station chiefs said they were confident that the National Grid would meet demand comfortably.

A combination of colder weather and the return of industry from the Christmas break is expected to produce demand for between 49,000 and 50,000 megawatts of electricity at this evening's peak. But electricity generators said there

would be 59,000 megawatts of capacity available - more than enough to ensure that the lights do not go out.

The previous record was set on 25 January last year when demand reached 48,800 megawatts. There is a possibility that peak consumption will exceed 50,000 megawatts for the first time later this month. Traditionally the second Tuesday in January - which this year falls on the 14th - has proved to be the day of highest demand. A dispute has been raging be-

tween the Grid and big industrial electricity consumers about the ability of the privatised power industry to meet demand. Several independent gas-fired plants are on inter-uptable supply contracts which means they can be taken off-line at short notice.

Lisa Waters of the Energy Intensive Users Group, whose members account for a quarter of daily UK electricity demand, said: "The impression we have is that the Grid has no contingency plans. They keep running

to our members and offering them huge sums of money to get off the system whenever a problem arises. "Nobody is taking responsibility for ensuring there is sufficient capacity to meet demand and the Grid should be worried."

However, a senior source at one of the privatised generators said: "It is in nobody's interests for security of supplies to be called into question. We are working flat out to make sure that we meet whatever demands are put on the system."

Clarke reviews forecasting

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kenneth Clarke, yesterday took the first steps towards contracting out the Treasury's economic forecasting to the private sector by announcing that he would shortly appoint consultants to study the feasibility of the idea.

The move threatens the jobs of up to 45 staff at the Treasury, but if the service is contracted out they will be allowed to mount an in-house bid in competition with private sector economic forecasters.

The idea of contracting out the forecasting function was floated in late 1994 in a Treasury review of its own expenditure which has since led to a sharp reduction in the number of civil servants.

But at the time Mr Clarke decided to delay the detailed review of the forecasting function for a couple of years.

The three-month consultants' study is to look at the feasibility of contracting out the central economic forecast and the forecasting and monitoring of public finances.

Other areas would include the background work required to produce the economic assumptions made in public expenditure planning, and the assessment of the accuracy of forecasts, by looking at what actually happens in the economy.

The Treasury said that if the consultants' report confirmed that a "market test" was feasible, a formal contract specification would be issued in late spring or early summer inviting outside organisations - and Treasury staff, if they wished - to make bids.

The aim would be to complete negotiations in time for the successful bidder to take over responsibility for forecasting from the end of this year.

The Treasury said the study would include the security implications of allowing an outside organisation to have access to sensitive forecasting information that is a key part of the Budget announcement.

It would also examine options such as moving the forecasting function entirely outside the Treasury or having civil servants working alongside a private firm.

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STOCK MARKETS						
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	4078.80	-37.70	-0.7	4118.50	3632.30	3.82
FTSE 250	4521.50	+4.10	+0.1	4568.80	4015.30	3.47
FTSE 350	2031.20	-10.50	-0.5	2043.80	1816.60	3.74
FTSE SmallCap	2209.25	+10.24	+0.5	2244.36	1954.06	3.06
FTSE All-Share	2004.15	-8.76	-0.4	2013.66	1791.95	3.69
New York	6534.47	-32.71	-0.5	6567.18	5032.94	2.03
Tokyo	18896.19	-549.81	-2.8	22666.80	18896.19	0.81
Hong Kong	13420.16	-23.77	-0.2	13530.95	10204.87	3.11
Frankfurt	2886.13	+4.81	+0.2	2908.91	2253.36	1.59

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES						
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Long Bond	(%) Year Ago
UK	6.16	7.00	7.73	7.48	7.80	7.63
US	5.44	5.75	6.56	5.70	6.80	6.07
Japan	0.38	0.50	2.57	2.99	-	-
Germany	3.09	3.19	5.97	5.59	6.83	6.72

MAIN PRICE CHANGES						
Rises	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change%	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p) % Change
Brit Borneo Pets	852.5	50	6.2	Wickes	195.5	221.0 52.9
Burford Higgs	156	8.5	5.8	Redland	345.5	14 3.9
MEPC	472	22	4.9	Fleming Jay Inv	189	6.3 3.2

CURRENCIES						
£/\$	£/DM	£/Y	£/A	£/S	£/F	£/C
Yesterday	1.6908	-2.05	1.5455	1.7125	+2.15	1.5490
DM (London)	2.6088	-3.05	2.2304	195.611	-3.02	162.581
Y (London)	115.695	-10.375	105.200	95.0	-1.1	83.3
S (London)	98.5	-0.3	94.7	211.76	-0.83	255.13

OTHER INDICATORS							
	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Next Figs
Oil Brent \$	24.48	-0.10	19.01	RPI	153.9	+2.7pc	149.8 16 Jan
Gold \$	359.00	+0.85	394.30	GDP	108.9	+2.3pc	105.7 27 Jan
Gold £	211.76	-0.83	255.13	Base Rates	-6.00pc	6.75	

صكنا من الالاحل



COMMENT

Forecasters hardly ever beat the average of their peers for more than a year or two at a time, so finding an outsider who will do better is about as easy as picking the Grand National winner

A virtual Treasury that Ken can live without

The "virtual corporation" seems to be all the rage these days so why not a virtual Treasury as well. Perhaps that is what the Chancellor had in mind when he announced yesterday that consultants will be appointed to study whether its economic forecasting functions should be contracted out to the private sector.

It all sounds very laudable and efficiency oriented. If the BBC can outsource just about everything apart from programme commissioning and airlines can contract out simple admin jobs to India, why not let Whitehall follow the lead?

But hold on a minute: surely one of the core roles of the Treasury is to monitor and forecast economic events and take action where necessary to correct problems?

Furthermore, the forecasting function is not confined to churning out the Budget Red Book once a year. Economic models are also used routinely in the Treasury to look at the impact of new policies for tax and spending.

For a start, there would be a minor security problem, in that an outside firm would have to be told all the tax and spending options. More seriously, to split the forecasting function from the analysis of policy options - which would have to remain in the Treasury - is an unnecessary extra complication and expense.

Given the questionable advantages of going this route, the potential cost savings look modest. With only 45 people affected, including support staff, the total budget must

only be a couple of million at most and the potential savings from contracting out must be considerably less.

The Treasury is no better and no worse at forecasting than other so called experts. Experience also shows that forecasters hardly ever beat the average of their peers for more than a year or two at a time, so finding an outsider who will do better would be about as easy as picking the Grand National winner. It is hard to see the point of it all.

Little British in British car industry

These days there are not many things about the British car industry that are still truly British, save perhaps for the spacious Belgrave headquarters of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

Britain long since gave up the pretence that it actually owned a car industry. Much easier to leave that to the Americans, the Japanese, the French and, God forbid, the Germans. Next it will, no kidding, be the Koreans. Now it appears that car buyers no longer need to keep up the pretence that they prefer to have a British-built model in the driveway either.

From the welter of statistics spewed out from the SMMT's portals yesterday, two stick out. Last year, for the first time since Henry Ford plunked a car plant in the Essex marshes, the "British" car industry exported

more of its output than it sold here. Second, and this follows logically, import penetration passed the 60 per cent mark for the first time.

Why bother making Metros, sorry Rover 100s, for the masses when Nicole is driving them crazy in her Renault Clio?

Does all this matter? The SMMT doesn't seem to think so. Indeed it was in positively self-congratulatory mood yesterday. Car sales have broken back through the 2 million barrier for the first time since 1990 and output has not been higher since way back in 1973 when we still had an empire to flog the Oxford Morris to.

Who cares that six in 10 buyers here now prefer something more exotic? Look at Italy and France, where imports are also rising. Look at Ireland and the Netherlands where the situation is even grimmer. (Neither sadly sports an indigenous car industry.)

In fact it almost certainly does matter. First, what profits are being made from the car industry are not accruing here. True, the sector may not as a whole be covering its cost of capital.

But when the good times roll, they will roll in the direction of Detroit, Tokyo, Paris, Munich and Seoul.

Second, where the profits (and the losses) roll is where the decisions are ultimately made. The Japanese are probably too far away and have too much capital invested to go cold on Britain - unless it goes cold on Europe. But it is a different story for the rest.

Linwood discovered that a generation ago. Longbridge and Halewood may one day find out that nothing is for ever.

No end to the Nikkei's woes

Most of those who think markets are going to fall this year have focused firmly on Wall Street. The case for this point of view is a strong and many-faceted one, but there is at least one aspect of it which is more than dubious. It is that the higher something goes, the further it will eventually fall. Not always, it seems. One thing is looking increasingly likely, however: Tokyo will have another bad year of it. A near-550 point fall in the Nikkei on Tuesday night gave a timely reminder of the endless sorrow of this once buoyant market. Just as there is little sign of Wall Street's dizzying ascent into the heavens coming to an end, it is hard to see why the pain of the Tokyo market should ease, either.

Until the summer, overseas investors kept the Nikkei index on a gently rising trend. They do this most years, the logic being much the same as that which sustains all those stale Wall Street bears. Eventually, inevitably, the Japanese market must revive, everyone says, and every year they seem to get it wrong. Those purchases have now dried up and it is hard to see why they would resume with the economy looking so lacklustre and the yen showing no sign of

renewed strength domestic investors will be tempted overseas for the same reason, looking for higher yields and a hedge against the weak yen.

Liquidity flows alone, then are likely to have a depressing effect on Japanese share prices. The fundamentals do not look very promising either.

One problem is the uncurbed debt hangover from the late 1980s. In its recent annual assessment of Japan the OECD said it was still impossible to estimate what the eventual cost of bailing out the banking system would be. The mountain of bad loans will remain a burden on government spending and on bank lending.

A second issue is the deregulation of the economy. Even the Japanese Government has conceded that this is a necessity. Although the process ought to be beneficial in the long-run, raising the profitability of the corporate sector above its past trend, it will bring short-term pain. The effect is to squeeze companies in the protected sectors - many of which are internationally uncompetitive - causing them to cut costs, transfer operations overseas where possible, and lay off workers.

Growth in the economy as a whole is going to struggle to reach 2 per cent this year. A recent tougher than expected budget has done nothing to bolster the position. Even at these depressed levels, present the valuations put on many Japanese companies hardly look justified.

Eagle Star takes on Virgin with cheap pensions

Nic Cicutti

Eagle Star, the insurer owned by tobacco giant BAT, yesterday opened another front in the escalating war over cut-price financial products by launching a personal pension it claimed was more competitive than any of its rivals, including Virgin.

The company argued that its pension was among the easiest to understand, had clear charges and involved no foot-in-the-door sales tactics.

Its new product comes ahead of a report tomorrow by the Personal Investment Authority, the regulator, which will examine the effect of company charges and expenses on financial products.

The PIA report is expected to show that in the two years since rules were introduced to force greater disclosure of charges, their impact has been limited.

Eagle Star's pension comes in the wake of a series of similar product launches, mostly aimed at a growing number of people who prefer to do business by telephone.

The company will charge a fixed £2 a month on the fund itself, plus an annual management charge of 1 per cent. Unlike other firms, which operate a so-called "bid-offer spread" of charges of about 5 per cent, all contributions are immediately allocated to the fund. Both these innovations are identical to those on offer from Virgin Direct, the growing financial services empire owned by airline tycoon Richard Branson.

Martin Campbell, product development manager at Virgin Direct, said: "It is good to see so soon after our pension was launched that other companies are trying to compete with us."

Eagle Star breaks new ground, however, by promising

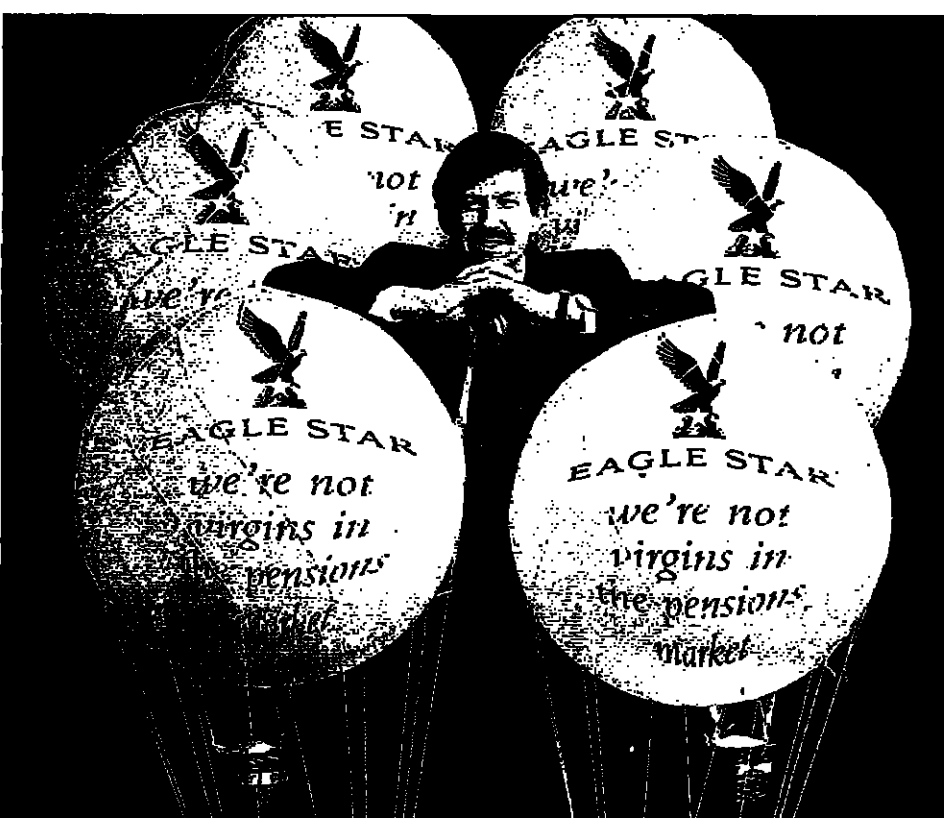
potential policyholders that if in the first two years they are unhappy with the pension, it will transfer the money to a pension scheme of their choice, without charge.

Steve Roberts, director of Eagle Star's new operation, said: "The personal pensions market has for too long been haunted by the dual problem of unclear charges and a high drop-out rate in early years."

"Our guarantee, together with the freedom to suspend contributions without penalty, means that early-surrender problems should be a thing of the past."

Eagle Star's launch reflects its determination to reclaim the initiative after several years of sluggish financial sales. The company recently installed a £55m computer system. It has also cut staff by 30 per cent to about 1,500 people.

The company hopes to attract



Steve Roberts: 'Early-surrender problems should be a thing of the past'

consumers jaded by traditional hard-sell tactics or opaque products and increasingly attracted by cheap, no-frills financial products.

Other companies to have entered the market include Scottish Widows, which saw telephone-

based sales account for more than 20 per cent of its pension premium income last year.

The new launches aim to compete with Equitable Life, which has for many years offered some of the cheapest products on the market.

Its pension has no monthly fee and, although it imposes a bid-offer charge of between 4.5 and 5 per cent to meet set-up costs, the annual management charge is 0.5 per cent, half the rate that Eagle Star imposes on its new pension.

TSB to offer home shopping

Nigel Cope

TSB is hoping to turn the tables on retailers that have moved into banking by offering a home-shopping service as part of a new current account.

The move comes as Sainsbury is poised to announce further details of its new telephone banking operation, the latest in a series of forays by retailers into the banking arena.

The TSB Select account - which customers must pay a fee of £3 a month to join - offers a hotline that will enable members to find the best price on more than 25,000 items including hi-fi, fridges and washing machines.

As there is no catalogue customers must decide broadly which product they want before contacting the hotline. The deals offered include those from manufacturers selling direct. The prices are compiled through database operator CUC Europe.

"Prices will be significantly cheaper than those available on the high street," claimed Peter McNamara, TSB's managing director of current accounts.

TSB says it will make no margin on the sale of products but hopes to gain revenue through credit card transactions and finance deals. The account also offers a motoring service where customers receive a guaranteed £500 off a new car.

Rivals said service was unlikely to work. "We considered this idea but didn't feel it had sufficient appeal," said Gordon Rankin, head of personal banking at Barclays.

He said TSB's idea was simply another example of "charged for" bank accounts.

Barclays launched Barclays Additions in October where account-holders also pay a monthly fee. NatWest has since launched NatWest Premier.

Mr Rankin said the flurry of launches would help establish the market for bank accounts where customers pay a monthly fee for a premium service. "The old method of having one kind of account for all customers is gradually giving way as people seek more choices."

TSB claims that customers will recoup their £3 a month charge if they make two purchases yearly.

Japanese shares dive amid fears for yen

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Japanese shares dived yesterday to their lowest level for more than a year, hit by concerns about the weak yen and fragile economic recovery.

The Nikkei 225 index fell by nearly 550 points to 18,896, taking its decline since the start of last month to 12 per cent - or about as much as Wall Street has risen over the same period. Analysts predicted that Japanese shares would slide even further as investors continued to move funds overseas for higher returns.

Jesper Koll, Tokyo economist for investment bank JP Morgan, said: "The level of interest rates is so close to zero that everyone from Mrs Watanabe to Fortune 500 companies are putting their assets to work in another currency."

Hiroshi Mitsuoka, Minister of Finance, joined the chorus of ministers and officials trying to talk the currency markets out of sending the yen even lower against the dollar. It fell to ¥117, its lowest level against the US currency for four years, in Tokyo trading yesterday before recovering slightly. "We want exchange rates to stabilise. We will

continue to act properly against excessive currency movements," Mr Mitsuoka said.

The yen's recent decline reflects subdued prospects for the economy. The Japanese government recently predicted that the economy would expand by 1.9 per cent in the year from 1 April, its lowest official forecast ever, while the OECD has forecast GDP growth of 1.6 per cent this calendar year. Yesterday Salomon Brothers in Tokyo predicted expansion of less than 1 per cent.

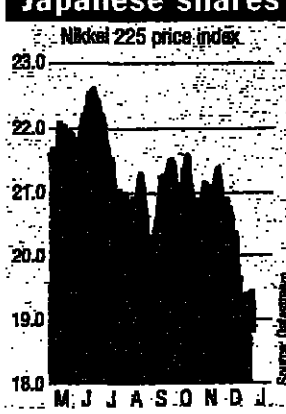
Gerard Lyons, an economist at Japanese bank DKB, said: "The economy has been locked

into a low growth path and it is not going to break out of it any time soon." The need for structural reforms was offsetting any cyclical upturn in growth, he said, with deregulation squeezing profits and triggering cost-cutting by Japanese companies.

There is little hope that the government can act to offset this economic frailty. Official interest rates, at 0.5 per cent since September 1995, are as low as they can be.

The recent budget has tightened fiscal policy, in the light of a deficit amounting to 4 per cent of GDP and a looming state pensions crisis.

Japanese shares



Baker to appeal against costs and reprimand

Julian Treanor
Banking Correspondent

Ron Baker, Nick Leeson's boss before Barings collapsed, yesterday lodged an appeal against a disciplinary tribunal's decision to order him to pay £7,500 in costs, and face a public reprimand over his conduct.

The tribunal cleared him late last year of four out of five charges brought against him. The Securities and Futures Authority, which is still bringing charges against Ian Hopkins and James Bax, two other former Barings executives, yesterday said it would not appeal the tribunal's decision.

The decisions by the SFA and Mr Baker were made just hours before yesterday's deadline for appealing.

Lindsay Hill, Mr Baker's lawyer at Fox Williams, said the appeal related to a narrow aspect of the tribunal's findings. "Mr Baker was reasonably content with what had gone before ... but he believes there are certain factual inaccuracies (in the judgment) and he would like to see them corrected."

These relate to the one charge in which the tribunal found against him, the supervision of the proprietary trading activities of Barings, which led to the reprimand and the order to pay costs.

In November, Mr Baker took the unusual step of publishing the result of the tribunal before the disciplinary process had run its full course.

The tribunal ruled in Mr Baker's favour on four of the

five counts on which the SFA had built its case and allowed him to escape a ban from the regulator's registration lists, which would have barred him from working in the City.

Both he and the regulator had the right to appeal within 10 days of receiving the written judgment from the tribunal, headed by Judge Colin Kolbert.

The SFA now needs to appoint three judges to sit before an appeals tribunal and arrange a date for the case to be heard. This will delay publication of the official charges brought against Mr Baker and also those faced by Mary Walz, another former Barings executive who has also escaped a ban from working in the City after reaching a settlement with the regulator.

BANK OF SCOTLAND INTEREST RATE CHANGE

With effect from 8th January 1997, interest rates payable on the undernoted accounts have changed.

MONEY MARKET CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross%
£250,000 and above	5.50
£100,000 to £249,999	4.50
£25,000 to £99,999	4.25
£2,500 to £24,999	3.50

BANKING DIRECT INVESTMENT ACCOUNT	Gross%
£250,000 and above	5.75
£25,000 to £249,999	5.25
£10,000 to £24,999	4.50
£5,000 to £9,999	3.75
Less than £5,000	3.25

MONEY MARKET BUSINESS CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross%
£250,000 and above	5.50
£100,000 to £249,999	4.50
£25,000 to £99,999	3.50
£5,000 to £24,999	3.00

BANKING DIRECT INSTANT ACCESS SAVINGS ACCOUNT	Gross%
£10,000 and above	5.60
£5,000 to £9,999	5.13
£500 to £4,999	4.65



*Gross - The annual rate of interest payable without the deduction of lower rate tax to eligible non-tax-payers. Interest payable monthly. Interest rates subject to variation.

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business

Bespak investors can breathe easy

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Peter Chambré has done a decent job at Bespak since moving over from Caradon to take the chief executive's post at the inhaler manufacturing group in May 1994. He has effectively cleared up the mess caused by an ill-fated contract with ML Laboratories and the mis-timed 1992 acquisition of Tenax, a US maker of plastic parts for medical devices. Yesterday's 46.5p jump in the shares to 527.5p on the back of better-than-expected half-year results to November is therefore well deserved.

The figures also show that he is capable of moving Bespak beyond the recovery phase to generate real growth, even if the 43 per cent jump in pre-tax profits to £39.4m on turnover up just a tenth to £39.4m reflected the benefits of some one-off factors.

The demise of the US patent over the ageing albuterol asthma treatment (better known as Glaxo Wellcome's Ventolin) led to the launch last January of three generic versions, all of which business Bespak won. Filling three new marketing pipelines, on top of those of existing customers Glaxo and Schering Plough, helped value sales soar by 28 per cent to around £15.4m in the half-year.

Meanwhile, sales continued to build around Glaxo's Acualer, the second-generation dry powder inhaler launched in Scandinavia in 1995.

Bespak's turnover in that product alone more than doubled from under £2m to £4.5m in the six months as the drugs giant rolled the product out across Europe.

Mr Chambré says about half the first-half profits growth came from higher volumes inflated by these developments and concedes that growth will slow from here on. Even so, Bespak can look forward to cashing in on the continuing 6 per cent growth in the US asthma inhaler market and has plenty else to look forward to.

The two-year restructuring of Tenax is nearly complete. The business should be back in profit in the second half, aided by the delayed launch of a new product. There should also be further benefits from sprucing up Bespak's manufacturing efficiency, which, with better customer service and lower costs, is said to have delivered the other half of the first-half profits rise.

Bespak's chances of picking up the manufacturing for the Acualer's US launch in 1996 have been improved by Glaxo's decision to raise its maximum order with the group from 10 million to 15 million units a year.

Its credibility is also enhanced by the announcement that Roger Mann, finance director at Siebe, is joining the board.

The only clouds are the switch to non-CFC propellants in inhalers, which could disrupt the market up to 2000, and the half-year collapse in profits in

Amey thrives on PFI contracts

Amey is best known for being one of several companies to have made a killing from rail privatisation, benefiting from British Rail's western region track maintenance business for a remarkably low £15m earlier this year.

Less apparent is Amey's ability to win Private Finance Initiative contracts when other contractors are bad-mouthing the whole government exercise as slow, inefficient and hideously expensive. Amey's latest PFI scoop – as part of a consortium behind a £370m scheme for a dual, three-lane motorway linking the M6 at Carlisle to the M74 120km further north in Scotland – helped push the shares to their highest level since they were floated on the stock market in 1994.

Analysts say the 30-year concession should net Amey about £30m, or an extra 10 per cent, in annual turnover at

margins which ought to be better than those scored under the traditional open tender system. Amey will also have to put up about £35m in equity funding, but the deal is expected to be cash-flow positive from a very early stage as the Government, in the form of the Scottish Office, pays the contractor what amounts to shadow tolls.

The M6/M74 contract is the third PFI project landed by the Amey consortium in the past six months. It has also been awarded the £330m contract to design, build and operate the A19/A1 extension to the Tyne tunnel in the North-east and a £175m project to build the 17-mile Croydon tram link system in the South-east.

These contracts effectively secure Amey's civil engineering workload for the next two years and provide valuable long-term facilities management and business. And with the Government's road-building programme at a virtual standstill, Amey is well placed to pick up road maintenance work.

But the real kicker for investors is the rail infrastructure maintenance company bought for just £15m from British Rail this year.

The first of Amey's rail maintenance contracts with Railtrack does not come up for renewal until 1999. By then Amey should be in a strong position

to negotiate favourable terms if it has built up a strong track safety record. For the time being house broker James Capel is sticking with its 1997 pre-tax profits forecast of £13m, implying a price/earnings ratio of just over 14 times with the shares up 21p at 373.5p.

The shares, as low as 118p last year, have built up a formidable head of steam, and have further to go.

Margins suffer in car salvage

Buying and selling cars written off by insurance companies is hardly glamorous work, but Universal Salvage is proof positive of the old adage about muck and brass. Founder Cliff Bassett made a handsome fortune for himself over 27 years and since floating the company last year has turned a tidy profit for outside shareholders too.

After coming to the market at 149p in August 1995 the shares soared to a high of 286p last year although they have flagged since and yesterday closed 6.5p lower at 238.5p as the market focused on a potentially worrying decline in returns on sales.

In the six months, if anything, Universal has been a victim of its own success with turnover increasing 24 per cent on the back of a 34 per cent increase in the volume of cars sold in the previous year to 40,600. A lack of storage space for those higher numbers of cars meant they had to be pushed through the auction halls quickly and prices fell as a result.

That hit margins in the half-year to October and profit before tax rose only 4.5 per cent to £2.3m (£2.2m) before charging £700,000 in the previous period to cover the costs of coming to the market. A new auction and storage site at Sandwich in Kent has alleviated the problem and margins are expected to have bottomed out now. Another drag on Universal's return on sales, an increase in the proportion of cars sold in closed auctions to breakers' yards, has also stabilised, according to the company.

The key to growth at Universal, which already controls about 15 per cent of the 500,000 or so write-offs every year in the UK, is to acquire new contracts with insurance companies. With about three-quarters of sales relating to fewer than a dozen insurance companies, Universal is vulnerable to any one moving its business. A number of new contracts are thought to be imminent.

On the basis of house broker Charterhouse's forecast of £5m profit before tax for 1997, the shares trade on a prospective price/earnings ratio of almost 20. That seems to be more than discount any margin improvement and new deals. High enough.

Savills boosted by housing boom

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

The booming housing market and a return to health for commercial property helped up-market estate agent Savills to a bumper first half-year to October.

Pre-tax profits soared 64 per cent to £3m (£1.8m), although the chairman, Richard Jewson, warned the imminent general election might reduce activity in all of its markets.

An early beneficiary of the nascent recovery in the residential property market thanks to its relatively high exposure to the better end of the London market, Savills said the exceptional improvement in its first-half figures would probably not be repeated in the second half to next April.

But Mr Jewson said: "With good underlying economic conditions, rising prices in the residential markets and improving occupational and investor demand in the commercial markets, the outlook is positive."

Higher profits were struck from a 30 per cent increase in turnover from £18.5m to

£24.1m. After a 57 per cent increase in earnings per share to 4.7p (3.0p), the interim dividend was raised by a third to 1p. Savills shares closed 2p higher at 101.5p.

Savills' profits have risen steadily since it dipped into the red in 1992 at the depth of the UK housing slump.

Its confidence about medium-term trends in the housing market chime with a number of recent industry forecasts of steady and sustained improvements in both prices and transaction volumes.

Rob Thomas, housing analyst at Swiss investment bank UBS, recently predicted a cumulative 46 per cent rise in the average price of a house between 1995 and 2000. He estimates a 10 per cent rise this year and a similar rise in 1998 with London, as usual, leading the recovery.

His confidence is based on calculations that show house prices still well below their long-term trend and due for a period of substantial "catching up". He also believes that a sea change in the outlook for inflation, and so interest rates, will mean a reassessment of the

amount housebuyers are prepared to borrow relative to their salaries which could further fuel house price rises.

Last November Savills increased its exposure to the buoyant central London residential market with the acquisition of George Stead. That deal doubled the number of Savills offices in London to 10. The offices have all been re-branded as Savills and take the UK chain to 31 outlets.

In the commercial market, Savills reported strong signs of an upturn with increased leasing activity in areas where the company is strong such as the Thames Valley corridor. Mr Jewson said there had also been outbreaks of rental growth in areas of high demand.

Legal & General recently issued a set of predictions for various asset classes this year, concluding that commercial property would outpace both gilts and equities in 1997.

L&G has pencilled in a total return for property of between 12 and 14 per cent this year compared with an expected return of only 4 per cent from a flat equity market.

UK Estates criticised as offer deadline looms

Patrick Toohy

The hostile, £21m takeover for Manchester-based UK Estates took another acrimonious turn yesterday when rival property group Ash Quay accused its directors of having a "thorough disregard for shareholders' interests" and of "mismanaging the company".

Ash Quay also sought to increase the pressure on UK Estates by sticking to the 13 January deadline as the final closing date for its offer. The Takeover Code allows for Ash Quay to extend its offer until 27 January.

The outcome could be close even though Ash Quay has already won over investors representing almost 38 per cent of UK Estates' ordinary shares and

16 per cent of its preference shares.

"We believe UK Estates shareholders have a simple choice," said Derek Tughan, Ash Quay's chairman.

"Prior to the announcement of the offer, UK Estates' ordinary shares had a value of just 22.5p; under the ordinary offer they are presently valued at 29.6p."

Shares in UK Estates closed unchanged at 27p, while those in Ash Quay stayed at 38.5p.

Ash Quay also repeated its charge that the target firm's management had rewarded itself despite "failing to enhance the value of the company's shares".

In particular, Ash Quay has highlighted UK Estates' administrative costs, which last

year totalled £970,000, and the £530,000 spent on shares for an employee benefit trust. Last year pre-tax profits at UK Estates fell from £610,000 to £382,000.

Ash Quay promised that the combined group would be prudently financed, with pro-forma gearing lower than that for UK Estates.

Ash Quay has offered 10 shares for every 13 ordinary UK Estates shares.

UK Estates has rejected the offer, noting Ash Quay is a smaller company with net assets less than half those of UK Estates.

It has also queried Ash Quay's reasons for shortening the bid deadline, suggesting Ash Quay might be unable to meet the costs of underwriting a rights issue to fund the takeover.

He's 86, but Jimmy can't drag himself away from the City

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Veteran broker: Jimmy Herbert can remember the 1929 Crash and is staggered by the amount of information available now

Congratulations in advance to Jimmy Herbert, Britain's oldest full-time working stockbroker, who celebrates his 86th birthday on Friday. As a partner of Branson & Gothard, Mr Herbert still works from 7.30am to 4.45pm daily – "probably because I'm an idiot," he says.

Not many people can remember the Wall Street Crash of 1929. So what changes strike Mr Herbert as he looks back over his career?

"The sheer volatility of the market nowadays is amazing – movements up and down totalling 100 points a day seem common. The other truly staggering change is the technology. Companies give out so much information nowadays, you can practically find out the colour of the chairman's underpants at the push of a button," he says.

He has no intentions of letting up, either. "The City is still a great place. Although we don't meet on the floor of the House [Stock Exchange] any more, we still meet around the City. I would miss it enormously. I became a member of the Stock Exchange in 1943 and I've enjoyed it."

"The 1974 crash was possibly the worst moment, looking back. But one always felt there was a way ahead."

No doubt Mr Herbert will have plenty of memories to share with colleagues at his party on Friday in the Fox, a suitably traditional City watering hole just north of Finsbury Square. Yuppies, weep your heart out.

George Mallinckrodt, president of Schroders, the most successful British merchant bank to remain independent, has got his just deserts: an honorary knighthood.

The honorary bit comes because he is a German national, having been born and brought up there. In fact his full German title is Georg Wilhelm von Mallinckrodt, and he has already been honoured by the

then Federal Republic of Germany in 1986 with the Verdienstkreuz am Bande des Verdienstordens, roughly translated as "a medal for services rendered".

Mr Mallinckrodt joined Schroders in New York in 1954 and in 1958 he married Charmaine Schroder, sister of Bruno Schroder, the family member who sits on the bank's board and represents roughly 40 per cent of the bank's shares.

In 1960 Mr Mallinckrodt was transferred to London and he became a director in 1977. He served as chairman from December 1984 until May 1995, and together with chief executive Win Bischoff turned Schroders into a premier merchant banking and fund management house.

It seems ironic that a German and a South African have managed to escape the overseas predators while rivals such as Warburg and Kleinwort have passed into overseas ownership.

Mr Mallinckrodt is a fully paid-up member of the great and good, sitting on a host of committees. He also played a leading role in the Bank of England's attempt to save Barings, and sat on the Treuhand, the east German privatisation board. He'll be a hard act to follow.

Talking of which, so will Ian Carr, who is due to retire from Carr's Milling Industries after 33 years as chairman – a distinction he shares with Sir Arnold Weinstock, who recently retired

from GEC, also after 33 years as chairman.

Chris Holmes, chief executive of the Carlisle-based food and engineering group, laughs. "It's just a coincidence. Ian is 68. The firm was founded by his great-grandfather in 1831. I'll be replaced by David Newton, chief executive of Hillsdown Holdings until last year."

Mr Newton, a mere spring chicken at 54, will take over next September. Mr Carr will remain as non-executive vice-chairman until August 1998.

Mr Holmes says: "He's an active sort of chap. He's still the chairman of the North Cumbria Health Authority."

Outside work, Mr Carr's main passion is golf. He's a member of the Royal & Ancient, St Andrew's, and Silloth Golf Club. He will have to wait until September, when he stands down officially as chairman, before he has more time to practise reducing his handicap.

Honor Chapman CBE, a partner in Jones Lang Wootton, has been appointed a Crown Estate Commissioner. A challenging job for a surveyor, as the Crown Estate is valued at over £2bn and is the largest property organisation in the UK.

The portfolio, which dates back to Edward the Confessor, includes urban property in London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham and elsewhere totalling almost 120,000 hectares.

The estate also owns around half the UK's offshore and almost all the seabed out to the 12-mile territorial limit.

Although part of the hereditary possessions of the Sovereign, since 1760 all of the revenues from the Crown Estate, which last year totalled £94.6m, have been paid to the Treasury, in part to fund the Civil List. Mrs Chapman joins the seven other commissioners following the retirement of Dick Caws.

John Willcock

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P166+ 15" Model • 32MB RAM • 2100 HD • 15" Screen • 33.6 Modem	£1291.33 inc.VAT	£1099 +VAT
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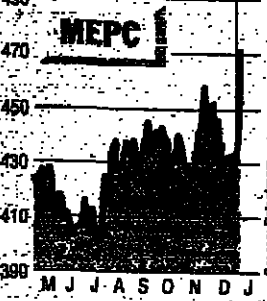
market report / shares

Data Bank

FTSE 100	4078.8	-27.7
FTSE 250	4521.5	+4.1
FTSE 350	2031.2	-10.5
SEAQ VOLUME	756.6m shares;	
	39,425 bargains	
Gifts Index	93.32	-0.01

Share spotlight

share price, pence



Wickes makes shame-faced return after suspension

Wickes, the disgraced do-it-yourself retailer, made a shame-faced return to the stock market. Following a seven-month suspension, after profits had been overstated by £51m, the shares touched 251p, closing at 196.5p against the equivalent of 417.5p. The nil-paid rights traded in line at 46.5p.

But for some half-hearted takeover rumours the shares may have performed even more dismally. With the company looking so vulnerable, even after its rescue rights issue, some speculators could not resist the temptation to gossip about the possibility of a strike.

Kingfisher, with the B&Q chain, was one name in the frame. Another was RMC, the building materials group which has long persevered with its 90-strong Great Mills operation.

There was, however, considerable scepticism about the likelihood of a bid. A deter-

mined bidder, it was argued, would have appeared before the shares were relisted. NatWest Securities suggested Wickes a sell above 200p.

The Wickes debacle involved profit over-statements spreading over three years. Since then the board has been reshaped and a Serious Fraud Office inquiry instituted.

Kingfisher fell 4.5p to 636.5p and RMC 22p to 976.5p.

The market suffered an acute attack of the jitters as talk of interest rate increases grew louder and New York failed to build on Monday's early strength. Tokyo's overnight slump was another disconcerting influence. It raised questions over the US bond market and weighed heavily on New York equities.

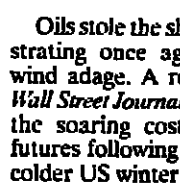
Footsie fell 27.7 points to 4,078.8 although supporting shares fared rather better with the FTSE 250 index up 4.1 to 4,521.5.



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year



Oil stole the show, demon-

strating once again the ill-

wind adage. A report in the

Wall Street Journal highlighted

the soaring cost of energy

with crude prices moving

higher oils needed no extra en-

couragement. British Petroleum

flared 9.5p to 691.5p.

Enterprise Oil up to 639p and

Lasmo 6p to 232.5p. British

Borneo Petroleum Syndicate,

helped by further Gulf of Mex-

ico expansion, jumped 5p to

an 852.5p peak. Shell missed

the fun, off 7p to 998p.

Properties also ducked the

nervousness. With forecasts

still flowing about this year's ex-

pected uplift in the commercial and residential property markets the likes of MEPC, up 22p at 472p, and Briston Estate, 7p to 213p, made headway. Slough Estates, seen in some quarters as a likely target for MEPC, gained 9.5p to 291.5p.

Legal & General, after Monday's late excitement, settled 2.5p higher at 379p and National Westminster Bank continued to score from the round of analytical support, gaining 4.5p to 710.5p. Red-

land, the building materials group, slipped 14p to 345.5p, arousing fears it could be a Footsie casualty when the next call-over takes place in March.

Rolls-Royce fell 6p to 251p on Barclays de Zoete Wedd caution; Hillsdown gained 0.5p to 190.5p as its round of meetings produced positive comments from SBC Warburg but sell advice from UBS.

GB Railways remained on the express line, gaining a further 32p to 242.5p.

Football shares were ruffled by cautious comments. Manchester United fell 13.5p to 674p and Sunderland 27.5p to 717.5p. Celtic crashed £100 to £425 and West Bromwich Albion lost £50 to £200, a two-day fall of £80. Chelsea Village fell 2.5p to 121.5p. It has raised £885,000 by placing shares at 118p. On Odeco, Rangers pulled up another 65p to 715p.

Eidos, the computer games group, gained 62.5p to 832.5p on US buying and Azlan, following its rights issue flop, edged ahead 11p to 581p.

On the mining pitch Reunion, the gold miner, jumped

11.5p to 84p following positive reports on its Namibia exploration. Fortune Oil eased to 12p as its major shareholder, Vital Energy, sold 15 million shares, cutting its stake to 13.36 per cent.

Union, the financial group where Joseph Lewis, the retiring Bahamas-based multi-millionaire is a significant shareholder, slumped 12.5p to 81p as the final dividend was dropped.

Ascus Recruitment, one of last year's top-performing shares, fell 4p to 87.5p after it announced a 75p placing to raise £500,000.

Finelist, the motor parts group, advanced 15p to 239p following a disclosure Motor World, taken over last year, would make a bigger profits contribution than had been expected.

Tradeport, running an order driven share trading facility, fell 10p to 93p.

Taking Stock

After three years of losses Pex, the sock maker rescued by Italian aristocrat Andrea Cattaneo Della Volta, is firmly in the black. Following interim profits of £192,000 Hardman & Co, the researcher, forecast a full-year's out-turn of £450,000 with £723,000 likely this year. Last month Pex paid £1.8m in cash and shares for Bridgedale, a maker of leisure socks. More deals are expected and the group is seeking to strengthen its management. The shares held at 6.75p.

Burdene, the caravan and hosiery group, mounted two share buy-backs in one day. All told, it collected 1,625,000 shares at 35.5p. It is unclear whether any buy-in stock came from a 1.4 million sale by Equitable Life on Friday. Burdene shares rose 1p to 36.5p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: F Ex rights = Ex-dividend & Ex all rights; U.S. = United States; S = Suspended; P = Partly Paid; A = All Shares; A All Shares.

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0800 123 333 and when prompted to dial 50 enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0591 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

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Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
BT	250000	ASDA Group	80000	Lloyds TSB	50000	Next	40000
Halford Ltd	100000	BP	80000	Leeds	40000	Leeds	40000
BT	120000	British Steel	70000	HSBC (75p)	40000	Timex	40000
British Gas	80000	Smith & Nephew	60000	Abbey National	40000	Smith & Nephew	40000
Cadbury	50000	Woolworths	50000	Heron	40000	Imperial Tobacco	40000

FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

Open 4035.30 down 30	11.00 4068.1 down 18.4	15.00 4068.1 down 24.9
09.00 4012.2 down 5.3	12.00 4068.2 down 18.3	16.00 4078.8 down 27.7
10.00 4060.4 down 18.1	13.00 4091.7 down 14.8	Close 4078.8 down 27.7

Telecommunications

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	120.00	British Telecom	120.00	BT	120.00	BT	120.00

Textiles & Apparel

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
Next	40.00	Next	40.00	Next	40.00	Next	40.00

Tobacco

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
Imperial Tobacco	40.00	Imperial Tobacco	40.00	Imperial Tobacco	40.00	Imperial Tobacco	40.00

Transport

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
British Airways	120.00	British Airways	120.00	British Airways	120.00	British Airways	120.00

Water

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
Thames Water	120.00	Thames Water	120.00	Thames Water	120.00	Thames Water	120.00

Support Services

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
Ascus Recruitment	87.50	Ascus Recruitment	87.50	Ascus Recruitment	87.50	Ascus Recruitment	87.50

Rights Issues

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
Ascus Recruitment	87.50	Ascus Recruitment	87.50	Ascus Recruitment	87.50	Ascus Recruitment	87.50

Recent Issues

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
Ascus Recruitment	87.50	Ascus Recruitment	87.50	Ascus Recruitment	87.50	Ascus Recruitment	87.50

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Longs

1996/97 Stock Price Chg Yld P/E

Government Securities

1996/97 Stock Price Chg Yld P/E

Shorts

1996/97 Stock Price Chg Yld P/E

Undated

1996/97 Stock Price Chg Yld P/E

Index-linked

1996/97 Stock Price Chg Yld P/E

Shorts

1996/97 Stock Price Chg Yld P/E

Undated

1996/97 Stock Price Chg Yld P/E

West
glanc

Foreign Exchange Rates*

STERLING			DOLLAR			D-MARK		
Country	Spot	1 month 3 months	Country	Spot	1 month 3 months	Country	Spot	
US	16523	25-49	38-39	US	12994	24-25	75-73	03892
Canada	12527	54-59	91-92	58-58	30-30	50-50	03892	
France	83467	207-86	640-63	12528	30-30	50-50	33771	
Germany	55-41	103-93	133-8	12527	28-35	91-91	92-79	
Italy	55035	55-61	281-276	12520	40-47	140-147	03892	
Japan	55-46	42-38	96-96	12520	5-14	44-45	03892	
ECU	13849	21-18	65-61	12520	7-5	20-27	208050	
Belgium	54536	222-177	655-556	12527	89-79	289-467	31136	
Denmark	25257	5-1	15-10	12527	5-14	25-21	11291	
Netherlands	29754	30-40	340-228	12527	6-3	4-6	02831	
Norway	5-1	15-10	30-30	12527	50-25	10-48	03892	
Spain	22233	3-10	5-8	12527	41-46	15-14	03892	
Sweden	12527	230-60	692-698	12527	41-46	15-14	03892	
Switzerland	25257	85-78	233-226	12527	40-47	10-11	03892	
Australia	21482	10-15	15-25	12527	2-0	2-7	42522	
Hong Kong	12527	240-242	240-242	12527	34-65	67-69	03892	
New Zealand	12527	0-0	0-0	12527	1-4	5-8	23399	
South Africa	23399	64-71	155-158	12527	34-39	70-75	03892	
Singapore	22577	0-0	0-0	12527				

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16554	03899	Nigeria	15198	712000
Australia	21482	103-93	Oman	12527	12527
Canada	12527	12527	Pakistan	673525	400739
China	140284	82376	Philippines	442822	253500
Egypt	57625	43859	Portugal	477320	521790
France	83467	207-86	Spain	67076	34047
Germany	55-41	103-93	Taiwan	940588	40590
Greece	25257	173000	South Africa	23399	272200
India	55035	55-61	Thailand	465229	272200
Indonesia	103891	323550	UK	12527	12527
Israel	55035	130000	USA	12527	12527

*Source: Reuters teletype unit to New York at 10.00 GMT on 10/10/82. All rates are quoted as British pounds sterling per unit of foreign currency. For the latter, foreign exchange rates are quoted in US dollars. All rates are quoted as British pounds sterling per unit of foreign currency. For the latter, foreign exchange rates are quoted in US dollars.

Tourist Rates

Country	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Australia	22000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Canada	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
France	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Germany	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Italy	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Japan	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Netherlands	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Spain	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Sweden	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Switzerland	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
UK	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
USA	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
UK	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
France	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%
Germany	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Italy	12.00%	12.00%	12.00%	12.00%	12.00%	12.00%
Japan	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Netherlands	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%
Spain	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Sweden	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%
Switzerland	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
UK	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
USA	10					

Bond Yields

Country	5 yr	10 yr	yield	Country	5 yr	10 yr	yield
US	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	Netherlands	9 5/8	4 7/8	6 1/8
UK	5 1/4	6 3/4	6 5/8	Spain	8 4/8	6 7/8	6 7/8
Japan	5 5/8	10 1/4	2 1/4	Belgium	9 1/8	4 7/8	7 1/8
Australia	9 1/4	25	7 1/8	ECU	9 1/8	5 1/8	6 1/4
France	8 1/8	4 1/8	8 1/8	London	9 1/8	5 1/8	6 1/4
Germany	7 1/8	4 1/8	8 1/8	UK	9 1/8	5 1/8	6 1/4
Netherlands	9 1/8	4 1/8	8 1/8	USA	9 1/8	5 1/8	6 1/4
Australia	25 1/8	25 1/8	25 1/8				

Source: OECD Market Reports. Yields calculated on bond basis. -- Dividend not determined.

Money Market Rates

Country	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	7 Year
US	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
UK	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
France	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
Germany	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
Italy	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
Japan	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
Netherlands	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
Spain	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
Sweden	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
Switzerland	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
UK	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8	10 1/8
USA	10				

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Close	Open
Long Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
German Govt Bd	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Italian Govt Bd	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
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3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
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3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
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3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	1

LATEST RELEASE	
Top Fifty	
CALCULATED ON MATCHES	
POS	NAME
1	MR PETER BARRETT
2	MR. CHANCE
3	MR. JOHN DRAPE
4	MR. KING
5	MR. GRETILE
6	MR. P. L. RICHARDS
7	MR. SMITH
8	MR. L. KNIGHT
9	MR. P. R. R. R.
10	MR. M. PENNICK
11	MR. O. NATHAN RUSSELL
12	MR. ROBERT GREENING
13	MR. ANDREW BARNES
14	MR. D. R. GREEN
15	MR. P. FRANKLIN
16	MR. J. NATHAN RUSSELL
17	MR. R. ROBINSON
18	MR. BARRY LEE
19	MR. GARY HARRISON
20	MR. G. MURPHY
21	MR. ADAM HOGG
22	MR. R. HARRISON
23	MR. S. PERCY
24	MR. GRAHAM LONDON
25	MR. J. GODWIN
26	MR. T. R. R. R.
27	MR. STEVE PAYNE
28	MR. K. WATSON
29	MR. S. KING
30	MR. R. R. R. R.
31	MR. R. R. R. R.
32	MR. C. NOBLE
33	MR. SCOTT LYNN
34	MR. R. R. R. R.
35	MR. STEPHEN MATTHEW
36	MR. DUNCAN PEARSON
37	MR. M. THOMAS
38	MR. G. R. R. R.
39	MR. C. M. DOWN
40	MR. R. R. R. R.
41	MR. R. R. R. R.
42	MR. K. R. R. R.
43	MR. W. R. R. R.
44	MR. J. R. R. R.
45	MR. J. R. R. R.
46	MR. J. R. R. R.
47	MR. J. R. R. R.
48	MR. J. R. R. R.
49	MR. J. R. R. R.
50	MR. J. R. R. R.

Westwood casts glance westward

Christmas arrived two days early for Lee Westwood. Ever since finishing sixth on the European Order of Merit, Westwood had been hoping for an invitation to the US Masters.

The Augusta National authorities, who have no set criteria for inviting non-Americans, have not always been so quick to recognise an emerging talent from overseas. It is safe to say that there will be more than a few of the green-jacketed brigade who will be asking "Where?", when the 23-year-old is announced on the first tee from "Workshop, England".

But Westwood's CV has gone before him and came with the endorsement of the European tour executive director, Ken Schofield. In 1996 Westwood rose from 258th to 64th in the Sony world rankings and shot up 69 places on the European money list. His maiden title came in a play-off at the Scandinavian Masters and he followed it up by outlasting Costantino Rocca, the current PGA champion, and Jeff Sluman, the 1988 US PGA winner, in a four-hole play-off at the Visa Taiheiyo Masters in Japan.

"I was screening the post for an Augusta postmark," Westwood's manager, Andrew Chandler, said. In fact, the invitation slipped through and was sent on to the player's home, arriving on the Monday before Christmas. It meant that another set of invitations, for Westwood's wedding to Andrew Collier's sister, Laura, which was due for the second Saturday in April, will not be sent out until the end of the year.

"He has never even been to America, let alone played golf there," added Chandler, who has been busy trying to get his client into a couple of tournaments that precede the Masters. Westwood, the son of a schoolteacher, has been busy on the pool table in the house he has moved into with Laura thanks to his £436,693 season. "The pool table arrived the same day as the Masters invitation," Chandler said. "It was

NEW FACES FOR '97: An invitation to this year's US Masters will help to put Worktop firmly on the golfing map of the world. Andy Farrell reports

hard to tell which he was more pleased about. The Masters is three months away, he could play pool immediately.

"It would have been disappointing not to get into the Masters after the year I had," Westwood said. "Winning in Japan proved I could play outside Europe as well as at home. I am really looking forward to it," he added, "especially with all this snow on the ground. I just want to be anywhere but here."

Westwood does not like to be idle long. Last year he played 37 times around the world, a heavy schedule by any journeyman's standards. "I'll probably go easy on myself and cut

first 10 cuts of last season and a fresh pair of eyes - Westwood had been with the same coach for seven years - produced a fresh impetus. Cowen got Westwood hitting the ball higher and playing more aggressively.

The Spanish trip will include a visit to Valderrama, the venue for September's Ryder Cup. Those are two words Westwood, currently 11th on the qualifying table, knows he is going to hear a lot of this year.

"Yes, I am, but I'm trying to set my sights on just getting in the Ryder Cup team. I'm hoping to win two tournaments and that will lead to getting into the team."

"There is a lot of hype. It is one week and it is eight months away but people are already getting excited. Already I've read in one of the papers that we are not going to have a chance. You work all year and it makes you wonder why you bother if they are slagging us off already. It spurs you on, though."

This year's European team should be one that features a few new names and in Westwood, Collier, Darren Clarke and Paul McGinley, Chandler's ISM management stable could be well represented at Valderrama. "They are good friends but there is a strong rivalry among them as well," Chandler said. "Lee is fearless. He likes a big challenge. He still has a sense of adventure about him and he has some good friends in Worktop who keep his feet on the ground."

Leviton may have been a problem after both Tom Watson and the Japanese legend Jumbo Ozaki made complimentary remarks after playing with Westwood. "It is always nice to have the really good players saying nice things about you. It gives you a lot of confidence. You must be doing things right. Last year was fantastic and if this year is half as good, it will be a great year."

'He has never even been to America, let alone played golf there'

it down to 35 this year," Westwood said. "I enjoy playing, and as soon as I don't I stop."

His Scandinavian win came on his 17th week on tour. At the half-way point, he phoned Chandler to say he had hit the wall. Chandler replied: "Well, make sure you make this weekend count." The manager adds: "Lee is a good listener, even if it does not look like it has gone in at the time. He knows he needs to cut down his schedule but he is not about to become a prima donna and only play 20 times."

Before starting the season in Australia at the end of the month, Westwood and some Tour colleagues will practice in Spain with the Lindrick pro, Peter Cowen. Westwood turned to Cowen after missing five of his



Lee Westwood: Hoping for a Ryder Cup berth in Valderrama in September

Photograph: Allsport

Skerrett moves on to Halifax

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

The twin cornerstones of Wigan's most dominant packs could face each other for their new clubs in Super League next season.

On the day that Salford paraded their new recruits, Andy Platt and John Cartwright, Halifax did their best to upstage them by announcing the signing of Platt's former front-row partner, Kelvin Skerrett.

Skerrett is joining Halifax on a short-term contract running until the end of March. The 30-year-old Test forward, who has had surgery on both his ankles, hopes to prove his fitness and earn a long-term deal. "I won a lot in the game at Wigan and went as far as I could with them," said Skerrett of his departure from Central Park with 12 months of his contract to run. "As they were in financial trouble, they agreed to end my contract so I could move on to other things."

Halifax's assistant coach, Steve Deakin, said: "Any Super League coach would want Kelvin Skerrett in their starting 17, so this is a great day for us. Wigan's loss is our gain."

Platt, signed by Salford from the Auckland Warriors, said he had been approached to return to Wigan but had been impressed by the professionalism of Salford. He and Cartwright, the Australian Test second-row, also rejected the chance to go to Leeds, much to the delight of the Salford coach, Andy Gregory. "They are two of the best forwards in the world and will give us the experience we will need in Super League," he said.

Salford have also signed the Welsh Commonwealth Games sprinter Peter Maitland, from Bridgend.

The Rugby League Council has agreed to set up a working party to look into the government of the game. One of its most troubled clubs, Bramley, is said to be close to finding a new home and ensuring its immediate survival.



INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

LATEST RESULTS AND TOP 50 TEAMS

Top Fifty LEAGUE TABLE

CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 29 DECEMBER

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	MR JOHN COX	SOUTHILL FC	497
2	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	488
3	MR PAUL RICHARDSON	CINCINNATI STORM	484
4	MR NICK LONIGHT	KNIGHTS NANA HEAD	482
5	MR M. KENNICK	WILD ROVERS	480
6	MR ROBERT GREENFIELD	THE GULLS	479
7	MR DARREN GREEN	FOR THE AZURE	476
8	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	475
9	MR D. ROBINSON	DOUBLE D	474
10	MR GARY HARROWE	101 ALLSTARS	473
11	MR G. MURPHY	CLEAN SHEET	472
12	MR ADAM HOGG	BLAGGY HOGG	472
13	MR S. J. PERCY	THE GREAT ESCAPERS	471
14	MR S. J. PERCY	THE GREAT ESCAPERS	471
15	MR J. GODWIN	NORWOOD	470
16	MR I. TARBOR	WARDEN	469
17	MR STEVE PAYNE	NO FUTURE IN FURY	469
18	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
19	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
20	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
21	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
22	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
23	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
24	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
25	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
26	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
27	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
28	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
29	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
30	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
31	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
32	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
33	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
34	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
35	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
36	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
37	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
38	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
39	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
40	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
41	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
42	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
43	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
44	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
45	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
46	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
47	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
48	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
49	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469
50	MR S. KING	CRUISING ALEXANDRA	469

Today we publish the latest results in our Independent Fantasy Football game, supported by Philips Energy Saver Light Bulbs.

The Team Market and Scores table published below, shows four scores. The Week 21 (Wk 21) column lists all points scored in matches played between Monday 30 December - Sunday 5 January inclusive. Column B lists all points scored before the transfer period. Column A lists all points scored after the transfer period. The Overall (Ov) column lists the total amount of points scored in all matches played from Saturday 17 August - Sunday 5 January.

Also published today is the Top 50 League table

(see left). It lists the overall top scoring Independent Fantasy Football managers and their teams for matches played between Saturday 17 August - Sunday 29 December.

Results will be published every Wednesday in The Independent for all games played from the previous Monday to Sunday inclusive. They will also appear the

SCORING SYSTEM

4 points for a goal ■ 4 points for a goalkeeper/defender clean sheet ■ 3 points for a successful assist ■ 1 point when a player is selected and plays ■ 1 point for a winning goal ■ 3 points for a manager win, 1 point for a draw ■ Lose 1 point for a yellow card ■ Lose 3 points for a red card

following Sunday, in the Independent on Sunday. The overall Top 50 League table will be printed every Wednesday and again on Sunday. Terms and conditions are as previously published and are available upon request.

PRIZES

The overall winner at the end of the season will be the entrant who has accrued more points than any other Independent Fantasy Football team in that time. Win the ultimate prize - a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. The winner, plus companion, will see all the action of a quarter-final and a semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's World Cup qualifying games at Wembley.

TEAM MARKET AND SCORES

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 5 JANUARY; WEEK 21 SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 30 DECEMBER - 5 JANUARY

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON POINTS PER MATCH																			
PLAYER					TEAM					PLAYER					TEAM				
CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE
			W21	Q (4p)				W21	Q (4p)				W21	Q (4p)				W21	Q (4p)
GOALKEEPERS																			
300	Scamson	AV	5	5	39	59	5	12	17	477	Raddock	LIV	1	2	36	39	3	3	3
303	Bowman	AV	5	5	12	17	4	12	17	478	Scalor	LIV	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
304	Powers	BLA	5	5	14	14	3	12	17	479	Scalor	LIV	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
305	Harwood	BLA	5	5	14	14	3	12	17	480	Harwood	LIV	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
306	Hitchcock	CHE	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	481	Norrie	LIV	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
307	Opencroft	CHE	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	482	Harwood	LIV	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
308	Southall	EVE	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	483	Irwin	MU	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
309	Marion	EVE	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	484	Ballistics	MU	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
310	Forde	DER	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	485	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
311	Schmedel	DER	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	486	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
312	Wright	DER	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	487	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
313	Hudson	NEW	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	488	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
314	Strick	NEW	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	489	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
315	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	490	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
316	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	491	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
317	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	492	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
318	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	493	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
319	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	494	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
320	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	495	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
321	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	496	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
322	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	497	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
323	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	498	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
324	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	499	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
325	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	500	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
326	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	501	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
327	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	502	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
328	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	503	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
329	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	504	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
330	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	505	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
331	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	506	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
332	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	507	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
333	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	508	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
334	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	509	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
335	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	510	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
336	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	511	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
337	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	512	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
338	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	513	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
339	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	514	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
340	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	515	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
341	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	516	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
342	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	517	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
343	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	518	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
344	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	519	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
345	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	520	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
346	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	521	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
347	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	522	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
348	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	523	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
349	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	524	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
350	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	525	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
351	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	526	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
352	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	527	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
353	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	528	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
354	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	529	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
355	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	530	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
356	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	531	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
357	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	532	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
358	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	533	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
359	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	534	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
360	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	535	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
361	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	536	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
362	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	537	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
363	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	538	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
364	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	539	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
365	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	540	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
366	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	541	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
367	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	542	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
368	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	543	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
369	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	544	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
370	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	545	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
371	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	546	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
372	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	547	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
373	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	548	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
374	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	549	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
375	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	550	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
376	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	551	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
377	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	552	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
378	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	553	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
379	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	554	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
380	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	555	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
381	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	556	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
382	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	557	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
383	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	558	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
384	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	559	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
385	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	560	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
386	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	561	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
387	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	562	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
388	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	563	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
389	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	564	Wicks	MU	5	31	27	4	4	4	4
390	Wright	NOT	5	5	12	12	3	12	17	565	Wicks	MU	5						

sport

Henman fights off the fatigue

Tennis
DERRICK WHYTE

Tim Henman put jet-lag and fatigue behind him to progress to the second round of the Sydney International yesterday and admitted: "I just tried to forget what I'd been through."

The British No 1 arrived in Sydney in the early hours before his first match against Renzo Furlan, having taken three separate flights from the Middle East.

He was broken in the first game but rallied to break the Italian in the next and went on to secure a 6-3, 6-4 victory just before midnight.

Afterwards Henman was relieved to have finally got his preparations for the Australian Open under way following a nightmare trip from Doha and a long delay for rain.

"I just tried to forget what I had been through in the last 24 hours," the world No 2 said. "When you are confident and hitting the ball well you don't think about too much out on the court."

"My concerns before the match were mental and physical. I wasn't sure how I would feel and how focused I would be. Overall I think it was a good performance. Tennis-wise I hit the ball well."

The 22-year-old from Oxford was particularly glad to have bounced back after losing the first game to the Italian, ranked 15 places below him.

He said: "In the first game I had 40-15 but then didn't play particularly well. It was a bad start to the match. But once I broke back in the second game of the match I felt pretty comfortable. I wanted to keep the momentum going this week."

The victory was a superb achievement by Henman following his tortuous journey to Sydney after his defeat by Jim Courier in the final of the Qatar Open in Doha. After finishing

the match at around 7pm local time, he went directly to the airport to catch a 9pm flight, firstly to Abu Dhabi and then on to Bangkok.

He then checked into a hotel for four hours and managed to fit in a work-out with coach David Felgate before catching a British Airways flight to Sydney, landing at 6.30am local time.

After just a few hours sleep Henman then went for a warm-up but was frustrated by heavy rain. With the first-round matches delayed he eventually got on court at 10pm and wrapped up victory just before midnight.

Henman was due to face the former French Open champion Sergi Bruguera in the second round today after the Spaniard defeated his compatriot Felix Mantilla.

Spain's Arantza Sanchez Vicario was the most prominent victim of the day yesterday as the seeds tumbled out of the tournament. Half of the 16 men's and women's seeds lost first-round matches including the men's No 2 seed, Wayne Ferreira of South Africa, beaten 2-6, 6-0, 6-3 by Spain's Carlos Moya.

Sanchez Vicario, the world No 3 and top seed in the women's draw, lost 6-3, 6-3 to American Amy Frazier, ranked 33, in a match delayed by rain and hit by high summer winds.

Jennifer Capriati defeated her fellow American Chanda Rubin and Yayuk Basuki of Indonesia beat Mary Pierce in straight sets.

Monica Seles, winner of the Australian Open four times, will be unable to defend her title next week because of a broken finger. Seles broke her right ring finger in two places while warming up for an exhibition tournament last month and has been unable to play since 4 December. The French No 1, Cedric Pioline, has also withdrawn because of back trouble.

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Australia slip to defeat again

Cricket

Pakistan recovered from a dismal top-order collapse to beat Australia by 29 runs in Hobart yesterday in a low-scoring World Series match dominated by the bowlers.

Chasing Pakistan's seemingly inadequate total of 149 all out, Australia were dismissed for a paltry 120 on a lively wicket at Bellerive Oval. It was a remarkable performance by Pakistan after their top three batsmen, Aamir Sohail, Zaheer Elahi and Ijaz Ahmed, were out for ducks to leave them in disarray at 7 for 3 early on.

But a spirited innings of 54, the highest score of the match, by Mohammad Wasim lifted his side to a respectable total that ultimately proved enough for his bowlers to defend.

The Pakistan captain, Wasim Akram, and fellow fast bowler Mohammad Zahid fully exploited a pitch that offered both movement and variable bounce to dismiss Australia in 41.3 overs.

Mohammad Zahid bowled at extreme pace to remove the all-rounder Greg Blewett and the leg-spinner Shane Warne, compensating for his occasional lack of control that cost three wickets and six no-balls. Wasim Akram, in contrast, combined his menace with relentless accuracy to claim 3 for 13 in eight overs.

A quick-fire century by Shivarine Chandrapaul helped West Indies to extend their winning streak on their tour of Australia with a 36-run defeat

of an Australian Country XI in a limited-overs match in Toowoomba yesterday.

West Indies made 275 for 7 from 50 overs and then dismissed their hosts for 239 to wrap up their third successive win. West Indies had lost their previous seven matches in a row in a disappointing start to the tour.

Chanderpaul's 123 was his second tour century. He was promoted one place up the batting order in the absence of Brian Lara, who was rested after making a return to form with a century in West Indies' seven-wicket win over Australia in the World Series on Sunday.

West Indies made a poor start after their captain, Courtney Walsh, won the toss and chose to bat, losing opener Robert Samuels for one before Chanderpaul and Sherwin Campbell set about the Australian Country attack. They shared a 119-run partnership from 112 deliveries, Campbell going on to make 65.

West Indies went into the match without their injured pace bowler Curtly Ambrose, but still managed to keep the Australian Country batting lineup in check with a part-time bowling attack. Middle-order batsman Michael Robinson top-scored for Australian Country with an unbeaten 50.

World Series (Hobart): Pakistan 149 (Mohammad Wasim 54, Australia 120 (Wasim Akram 53). Pakistan won by 29 runs. Standings: West Indies (P5 Points); Pakistan (5-0); 3 Australia (5-4).

Tour Match (Toowoomba, Aust): West Indies 275 for 7 (Sh Chandrapaul 123, S Campbell 65), Australian Country XI 239 (Michael Robinson 50). West Indies won by 36 runs.

RACING RESULTS

LINGFIELD
1.00: 1. SUPREME STAR (Dane O'Hall) 11.4, 2. Nothing Doing 15.8 favourite; 3. A Hail 10.1, 22.2, 23.2, 24.2, 25.2, 26.2, 27.2, 28.2, 29.2, 30.2, 31.2, 32.2, 33.2, 34.2, 35.2, 36.2, 37.2, 38.2, 39.2, 40.2, 41.2, 42.2, 43.2, 44.2, 45.2, 46.2, 47.2, 48.2, 49.2, 50.2, 51.2, 52.2, 53.2, 54.2, 55.2, 56.2, 57.2, 58.2, 59.2, 60.2, 61.2, 62.2, 63.2, 64.2, 65.2, 66.2, 67.2, 68.2, 69.2, 70.2, 71.2, 72.2, 73.2, 74.2, 75.2, 76.2, 77.2, 78.2, 79.2, 80.2, 81.2, 82.2, 83.2, 84.2, 85.2, 86.2, 87.2, 88.2, 89.2, 90.2, 91.2, 92.2, 93.2, 94.2, 95.2, 96.2, 97.2, 98.2, 99.2, 100.2, 101.2, 102.2, 103.2, 104.2, 105.2, 106.2, 107.2, 108.2, 109.2, 110.2, 111.2, 112.2, 113.2, 114.2, 115.2, 116.2, 117.2, 118.2, 119.2, 120.2, 121.2, 122.2, 123.2, 124.2, 125.2, 126.2, 127.2, 128.2, 129.2, 130.2, 131.2, 132.2, 133.2, 134.2, 135.2, 136.2, 137.2, 138.2, 139.2, 140.2, 141.2, 142.2, 143.2, 144.2, 145.2, 146.2, 147.2, 148.2, 149.2, 150.2, 151.2, 152.2, 153.2, 154.2, 155.2, 156.2, 157.2, 158.2, 159.2, 160.2, 161.2, 162.2, 163.2, 164.2, 165.2, 166.2, 167.2, 168.2, 169.2, 170.2, 171.2, 172.2, 173.2, 174.2, 175.2, 176.2, 177.2, 178.2, 179.2, 180.2, 181.2, 182.2, 183.2, 184.2, 185.2, 186.2, 187.2, 188.2, 189.2, 190.2, 191.2, 192.2, 193.2, 194.2, 195.2, 196.2, 197.2, 198.2, 199.2, 200.2, 201.2, 202.2, 203.2, 204.2, 205.2, 206.2, 207.2, 208.2, 209.2, 210.2, 211.2, 212.2, 213.2, 214.2, 215.2, 216.2, 217.2, 218.2, 219.2, 220.2, 221.2, 222.2, 223.2, 224.2, 225.2, 226.2, 227.2, 228.2, 229.2, 230.2, 231.2, 232.2, 233.2, 234.2, 235.2, 236.2, 237.2, 238.2, 239.2, 240.2, 241.2, 242.2, 243.2, 244.2, 245.2, 246.2, 247.2, 248.2, 249.2, 250.2, 251.2, 252.2, 253.2, 254.2, 255.2, 256.2, 257.2, 258.2, 259.2, 260.2, 261.2, 262.2, 263.2, 264.2, 265.2, 266.2, 267.2, 268.2, 269.2, 270.2, 271.2, 272.2, 273.2, 274.2, 275.2, 276.2, 277.2, 278.2, 279.2, 280.2, 281.2, 282.2, 283.2, 284.2, 285.2, 286.2, 287.2, 288.2, 289.2, 290.2, 291.2, 292.2, 293.2, 294.2, 295.2, 296.2, 297.2, 298.2, 299.2, 300.2, 301.2, 302.2, 303.2, 304.2, 305.2, 306.2, 307.2, 308.2, 309.2, 310.2, 311.2, 312.2, 313.2, 314.2, 315.2, 316.2, 317.2, 318.2, 319.2, 320.2, 321.2, 322.2, 323.2, 324.2, 325.2, 326.2, 327.2, 328.2, 329.2, 330.2, 331.2, 332.2, 333.2, 334.2, 335.2, 336.2, 337.2, 338.2, 339.2, 340.2, 341.2, 342.2, 343.2, 344.2, 345.2, 346.2, 347.2, 348.2, 349.2, 350.2, 351.2, 352.2, 353.2, 354.2, 355.2, 356.2, 357.2, 358.2, 359.2, 360.2, 361.2, 362.2, 363.2, 364.2, 365.2, 366.2, 367.2, 368.2, 369.2, 370.2, 371.2, 372.2, 373.2, 374.2, 375.2, 376.2, 377.2, 378.2, 379.2, 380.2, 381.2, 382.2, 383.2, 384.2, 385.2, 386.2, 387.2, 388.2, 389.2, 390.2, 391.2, 392.2, 393.2, 394.2, 395.2, 396.2, 397.2, 398.2, 399.2, 400.2, 401.2, 402.2, 403.2, 404.2, 405.2, 406.2, 407.2, 408.2, 409.2, 410.2, 411.2, 412.2, 413.2, 414.2, 415.2, 416.2, 417.2, 418.2, 419.2, 420.2, 421.2, 422.2, 423.2, 424.2, 425.2, 426.2, 427.2, 428.2, 429.2, 430.2, 431.2, 432.2, 433.2, 434.2, 435.2, 436.2, 437.2, 438.2, 439.2, 440.2, 441.2, 442.2, 443.2, 444.2, 445.2, 446.2, 447.2, 448.2, 449.2, 450.2, 451.2, 452.2, 453.2, 454.2, 455.2, 456.2, 457.2, 458.2, 459.2, 460.2, 461.2, 462.2, 463.2, 464.2, 465.2, 466.2, 467.2, 468.2, 469.2, 470.2, 471.2, 472.2, 473.2, 474.2, 475.2, 476.2, 477.2, 478.2, 479.2, 480.2, 481.2, 482.2, 483.2, 484.2, 485.2, 486.2, 487.2, 488.2, 489.2, 490.2, 491.2, 492.2, 493.2, 494.2, 495.2, 496.2, 497.2, 498.2, 499.2, 500.2, 501.2, 502.2, 503.2, 504.2, 505.2, 506.2, 507.2, 508.2, 509.2, 510.2, 511.2, 512.2, 513.2, 514.2, 515.2, 516.2, 517.2, 518.2, 519.2, 520.2, 521.2, 522.2, 523.2, 524.2, 525.2, 526.2, 527.2, 528.2, 529.2, 530.2, 531.2, 532.2, 533.2, 534.2, 535.2, 536.2, 537.2, 538.2, 539.2, 540.2, 541.2, 542.2, 543.2, 544.2, 545.2, 546.2, 547.2, 548.2, 549.2, 550.2, 551.2, 552.2, 553.2, 554.2, 555.2, 556.2, 557.2, 558.2, 559.2, 560.2, 561.2, 562.2, 563.2, 564.2, 565.2, 566.2, 567.2, 568.2, 569.2, 570.2, 571.2, 572.2, 573.2, 574.2, 575.2, 576.2, 577.2, 578.2, 579.2, 580.2, 581.2, 582.2, 583.2, 584.2, 585.2, 586.2, 587.2, 588.2, 589.2, 590.2, 591.2, 592.2, 593.2, 594.2, 595.2, 596.2, 597.2, 598.2, 599.2, 600.2, 601.2, 602.2, 603.2, 604.2, 605.2, 606.2, 607.2, 608.2, 609.2, 610.2, 611.2, 612.2, 613.2, 614.2, 615.2, 616.2, 617.2, 618.2, 619.2, 620.2, 621.2, 622.2, 623.2, 624.2, 625.2, 626.2, 627.2, 628.2, 629.2, 630.2, 631.2, 632.2, 633.2, 634.2, 635.2, 636.2, 637.2, 638.2, 639.2, 640.2, 641.2, 642.2, 643.2, 644.2, 645.2, 646.2, 647.2, 648.2, 649.2, 650.2, 651.2, 652.2, 653.2, 654.2, 655.2, 656.2, 657.2, 658.2, 659.2, 660.2, 661.2, 662.2, 663.2, 664.2, 665.2, 666.2, 667.2, 668.2, 669.2, 670.2, 671.2, 672.2, 673.2, 674.2, 675.2, 676.2, 677.2, 678.2, 679.2, 680.2, 681.2, 682.2, 683.2, 684.2, 685.2, 686.2, 687.2, 688.2, 689.2, 690.2, 691.2, 692.2, 693.2, 694.2, 695.2, 696.2, 697.2, 698.2, 699.2, 700.2, 701.2, 702.2, 703.2, 704.2, 705.2, 706.2, 707.2, 708.2, 709.2, 710.2, 711.2, 712.2, 713.2, 714.2, 715.2, 716.2, 717.2, 718.2, 719.2, 720.2, 721.2, 722.2, 723.2, 724.2, 725.2, 726.2, 727.2, 728.2, 729.2, 730.2, 731.2, 732.2, 733.2, 734.2, 735.2, 736.2, 737.2, 738.2, 739.2, 740.2, 741.2, 742.2, 743.2, 744.2, 745.2, 746.2, 747.2, 748.2, 749.2, 750.2, 751.2, 752.2, 753.2, 754.2, 755.2, 756.2, 757.2, 758.2, 759.2, 760.2, 761.2, 762.2, 763.2, 764.2, 765.2, 766.2, 767.2, 768.2, 769.2, 770.2, 771.2, 772.2, 773.2, 774.2, 775.2, 776.2, 777.2, 778.2, 779.2, 780.2, 781.2, 782.2, 783.2, 784.2, 785.2, 786.2, 787.2, 788.2, 789.2, 790.2, 791.2, 792.2, 793.2, 794.2, 795.2, 796.2, 797.2, 798.2, 799.2, 800.2, 801.2, 802.2, 803.2, 804.2, 805.2, 806.2, 807.2, 808.2, 809.2, 810.2, 811.2, 812.2, 813.2, 814.2, 815.2, 816.2, 817.2, 818.2, 819.2, 820.2, 821.2, 822.2, 823.2, 824.2, 825.2, 826.2, 827.2, 828.2, 829.2, 830.2, 831.2, 832.2, 833.2, 834.2, 835.2, 836.2, 837.2, 838.2, 839.2, 840.2, 841.2, 842.2, 843.2, 844.2, 845.2, 846.2, 847.2, 848.2, 849.2, 850.2, 851.2, 852.2, 853.2, 854.2, 855.2, 856.2, 857.2, 858.2, 859.2, 860.2, 861.2, 862.2, 863.2, 864.2, 865.2, 866.2, 867.2, 868.2, 869.2, 870.2, 871.2, 872.2, 873.2, 874.2, 875.2, 876.2, 877.2, 878.2, 879.2, 880.2, 881.2, 882.2, 883.2, 884.2, 885.2, 886.2, 887.2, 888.2, 889.2, 890.2, 891.2, 892.2, 893.2, 894.2, 895.2, 896.2, 897.2, 898.2, 899.2, 900.2, 901.2, 902.2, 903.2, 904.2, 905.2, 906.2, 907.2, 908.2, 909.2, 910.2, 911.2, 912.2, 913.2, 914.2, 915.2, 916.2, 917.2, 918.2, 919.2, 920.2, 921.2, 922.2, 923.2, 924.2, 925.2, 926.2, 927.2, 928.2, 929.2, 930.2, 931.2, 932.2, 933.2, 934.2, 935.2, 936.2, 937.2, 938.2, 939.2, 940.2, 941.2, 942.2, 943.2, 944.2, 945.2, 946.2, 947.2, 948.2, 949.2, 950.2, 951.2, 952.2, 953.2, 954.2, 955.2, 956.2, 957.2, 958.2, 959.2, 960.2, 961.2, 962.2, 963.2, 964.2, 965.2, 966.2, 967.2, 968.2, 969.2, 970.2, 971.2, 972.2, 973.2, 974.2, 975.2, 976.2, 977.2, 978.2, 979.2, 980.2, 981.2, 982.2, 983.2, 984.2, 985.2, 986.2, 987.2, 988.2, 989.2, 990.2, 991.2, 992.2, 993.2, 994.2, 995.2, 996.2, 997.2, 998.2, 999.2, 1000.2, 1001.2, 1002.2, 1003.2, 1004.2, 1005.2, 1006.2, 1007.2, 1008.2, 1009.2, 1010.2, 1011.2, 1012.2, 1013.2, 1014.2, 1015.2, 1016.2, 1017.2, 1018.2, 1019.2, 1020.2, 1021.2, 1022.2, 1023.2, 1024.2, 1025.2, 1026.2, 1027.2, 1028.2, 1029.2, 1030.2, 1031.2, 1032.2, 1033.2, 1034.2, 1035.2, 1036.2, 1037.2, 1038.2, 1039.2, 1040.2, 1041.2, 1042.2, 1043.2, 1044.2, 1045.2, 1046.2, 1047.2, 1048.2, 1049.2, 1050.2, 1051.2, 1052.2, 1053.2, 1054.2, 1055.2, 1056.2, 1057.2, 1058.2, 1059.2, 1060.2, 1061.2, 1062.2, 1063.2, 1064.2, 1065.2, 1066.2, 1067.2, 1068.2, 1069.2, 1070.2, 1071.2, 1072.2, 1073.2, 1074.2, 1075.2, 1076.2, 1077.2, 1078.2, 1079.2, 1080.2, 1081.2, 1082.2, 1083.2, 1084.2, 1085.2, 1086.2, 1087.2, 1088.2, 1089.2, 1090.2, 1091.2, 1092.2, 1093.2, 1094.2, 1095.2, 1096.2, 1097.2, 1098.2, 1099.2, 1100.2, 1101.2, 1102.2, 1103.2, 1104.2, 1105.2, 1106.2, 1107.2, 1108.2, 1109.2, 1110.2, 1111.2, 1112.2, 1113.2, 1114.2, 1115.2, 1116.2, 1117.2, 1118.2, 1119.2, 1120.2, 1121.2, 1122.2, 1123.2, 1124.2, 1125.2, 1126.2, 1127.2, 1128.2, 1129.2, 1130.2, 1131.2, 1132.2, 1133.2, 1134.2, 1135.2, 1136.2, 1137.2, 1138.2, 1139.2, 1140.2, 1141.2, 1142.2, 1143.2, 1144.2, 1145.2, 1146.2, 1147.2, 1148.2, 1149.2, 1150.2, 1151.2, 1152.2, 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Gibbs to captain Wales for the first time

Rugby Union

Scott Gibbs will captain Wales for the first time when he leads the national side against the United States at Cardiff Arms Park on Saturday.

The Swansea centre takes over from the Cardiff hooker Jonathan Humphreys, who has decided not to appeal after receiving a seven-day ban following his sending-off in Sunday's European Cup semi-final defeat at Brive.

Gavin Jenkins has been elevated from the replacements bench to play instead of Humphreys. The Swansea hooker wins his 31st cap. Barry Williams, of Neath, is the new replacement hooker.

Wales' coach, Kevin Bowring, said: "I have used this as an opportunity for someone to gain personal development from the situation, rather than go to a trial and trusted captain."

Gibbs has played just three Tests after returning from rugby league with St Helens.

Bowring added: "I have been impressed with Scott's focus, attitude and discipline. His contribution has been impressive since he returned from rugby league - both on and off the field."

Bowring felt that Humphreys had been "very sensible" to drop his appeal against his suspension. The 27-year-old hooker said: "Although bitterly disappointed to be sent off for the first time in my career I have decided not to appeal against the decision."

"As captain of Wales, I am mindful of the need to set an example and will accept the adjudicator's decision, even though it is very painful to take."

"By choosing this route, it allows the Welsh team to prepare without any interruption for the game against the USA and this must be my ultimate concern."

The flanker Ian Smith will miss the opening match of Scotland's Five Nations Championship after breaking his thumb while playing for Gloucester.

Smith had hoped to recover from the injury suffered in a Pilkington Cup game against Leeds last month in time for Scotland's opener against Wales at Murrayfield. But Smith, who has won 20 Scottish caps, had to undergo surgery to pin the broken bone and it will not be removed until the day of Wales match in two weeks' time. It will be the first full Scottish international Smith has missed since the 1995 World Cup finals.

Andy Robinson will combine his Bath playing and coaching roles at least for the remainder of this season. The former England flanker lines up against Anglo-Welsh Cup opponents Swansea tonight, among six Bath internationals on show.

"It is important I maintain my fitness," said Robinson, who on Monday succeeded Brian Ash-ton as Bath's full-time head coach. "I am needed as cover for our other open-side flanker, Nathan Thomas, and will need to be ready if Nathan got injured."

Courage League Second Division strugglers Moseley are to be docked two points for playing an unregistered player following a dramatic about-turn. Moseley have admitted they made an administrative error by playing lock Andy Frickie in their defeat at Bedford in November, while he was still registered with his first club Woodrush. English Professional Rugby Union Clubs Ltd announced two weeks ago they would not punish the Midlands side, but the Rugby Football Union's competition sub-committee have now overruled them.

Offers mounting up for Greening

The directors of Gloucester will meet next week to discuss how to hold on to their young hooker Phil Greening, the subject of several big-money offers. Less than a year ago, when he was still a relative unknown, Greening turned down an offer of £85,000 a year to join Rob Andrew at Newcastle.

Since then the 21-year-old has made his full England debut, establishing himself as the country's No 2 hooker, and becoming an even hotter property.

Greening's agent, Mike Burton, the former Gloucester and England prop, said he has had offers from Gloucester, Saracens, Newcastle, Wasps, Harlequins and Richmond, who are all funded by millionaire backers.

"I have got a lot of offers for him and I have informed Gloucester of them," Burton said. "We will have to sit down and discuss his future later in the week."

Gloucester's directors will discuss Greening's situation at a board meeting next Monday. They are likely to be torn between the desire to keep their young talent and the temptation to sell him to fund the recruitment of more players.

"We wouldn't want him to leave," David Foster, the board chairman, said yesterday. "We haven't had an official offer but I gather there may be something we could consider at our board meeting on Monday."

Greening, who is Gloucester born and bred, has always said he wants to stay at Kingsholm and is not in the game for the money. "I'd rather play for Gloucester for 10p than leave home," he once said. But as the stakes rise with his own meteoric ascendancy, the temptation may become too much.

Crisis club Llanelli have announced they will hold an extraordinary general meeting at their Stradey Park ground on 29 January.

The club committee preempted a call for such a meeting from many of their 4,000 members, following the collapse of a £3m investment package from the businessman Mel Davies.

Stuart Gallagher, the chairman and a former Wales cap at union and league, may have to face a call to stand down, along with the committee and trustees.

Gallagher admitted: "Our problems will be explained to the membership but it is obvious that times are difficult for everyone. When we look back at the season, we will be seen as one of the most disastrous in the history of the game."

The club need to stage home matches to bring revenue in and have rearranged their First Division match against Cardiff for Wednesday, 26 February.

England's leading clubs may have a couple of final demands as their dispute with the Rugby Football Union extends into a third year. Representatives of the Courage League One and Two teams met yesterday in separate locations to scrutinise the small print of the Rugby Football Union's draft agreement which English Professional Rugby Union Clubs recommended for acceptance last month.

There could be signing in the next few weeks that would mean the creation of a joint EPRU-RFU company and a truce in the feud. But EPRU are expected to push for yet another change in the promotion-relegation situation between divisions One and Two.

They want only two teams relegated instead of four. The move is a move to keep the First Division at 12 teams, with two relegated and two promoted.

Rangers deny £6.25m deal for Gascoigne

Football

Rangers yesterday dismissed claims Paul Gascoigne has been offered a £6.25m golden-handcuff deal to remain with them until the end of his career. The Ibrox club described Gascoigne's reported five-year deal with a reputed annual salary of £1.25m as "sheer speculation".

Archie Knox, the assistant manager, said: "It's not true. We have to contend with stories like this all the time. When there is something to be announced we will tell people."

Gascoigne's current deal with the Scottish champions expires at the end of next season. In 1995 Rangers manager, Walter Smith, paid the Italian club Lazio £4.3m to sign the player on a three-year contract.

The controversial England midfielder has been a massive success at Ibrox, helping the club to a league championship and Scottish Cup double in his first season during which he scored 19 goals and won the Scottish Player of the Year award.

Gascoigne will be 30 in May and a number of English clubs are keen to take the rejuvenated former Newcastle and Spurs player back south. However, Gascoigne has a huge personal loyalty to Rangers boss Smith, whom he has credited for reviving his career when many top English clubs shied away from him because of fears over his fitness, and may wish to repay that faith by signing a new deal.

Meanwhile, Rangers' extensive list of sick players have been given another day in bed in the hope of recovering from flu in time to face Aberdeen at Ibrox this Sunday.

The Premier League leaders played Hibernian last weekend under protest after failing to have the game postponed, despite presenting doctor's certificates for 28 players. Some, such as Brian Laudrup, Erik Bo Andersen and Ian Ferguson, played despite being unwell, and Knox said yesterday: "The players are all off for another day and we'll see what condition they are in when they return tomorrow."

John Toshack arrived at Deportivo La Coruña's Riazor stadium yesterday to find it daubed with graffiti criticising him. "Toshack go home," read the graffiti, which was written in English and echoed a similar protest made against Barcelona's Bobby Robson last month.

On Monday the Welshman appeared to announce his intention to leave the club at the end of the season. But he tried to limit the damage done to his already poor relationship with Deportivo fans at a press conference yesterday.

He said: "The supporters are always right, they pay, and so we get paid. Saying they've been unjust with me is not an insult."

He claimed his initial remarks had been misinterpreted. "On 30 June [when his contract ends] I could be on the beach, or at a bullfight, or playing golf. Nobody's spoken to me yet," Toshack said.

Manchester City, Blackburn and Sporting Lisbon have been named in the Spanish press among clubs interested in securing the services of the former Liverpool and Wales striker, although Manchester City would not seem to be out of the running.



Transport of delight: Eddie Irvine (far right) and Michael Schumacher have their first look at the new Ferrari at the team's Fiorano test track in Maranello yesterday, while Ferrari's president, Luca di Montezemolo, explains the finer points of car to journalists. Photograph: John Mars/Empics

Schumacher doubts he can win title

Motor racing

Michael Schumacher said yesterday that he remains sceptical about Ferrari's ability to propel him to a third Formula One world title in the coming season.

The German, speaking at the unveiling of Ferrari's latest vehicle at the team's Fiorano test track in Maranello, was cautious about Ferrari's prospects for the new season, which starts in eight weeks' time. "My real hope is that we can compete for

the championship and put pressure on the Williams team or any other that sets the pace, or that we will be under pressure from them, but I cannot predict that we will be champions."

"To be honest, I think this year we are looking for reliability and a big improvement on last year, but the real championship for us should come in 1998."

Schumacher, whose new contract keeps him with Ferrari until 1999, was nevertheless impressed by the new Ferrari F310B on his first close look at it. He supported the view of John

Barnard, the Italian team's British chief designer, that it was more important to meet the post-Christmas deadline for the car's launch with a reliable competitor than to experiment with innovations. However, Barnard already has revisions and modifications planned. Some may be introduced after the eight weeks of initial testing, which start today and end before the season's first grand prix, in Australia on 9 March.

The new car, an evolution of Barnard's unreliable and troublesome, but adventurous 1996

model, showed several changes. Barnard said the most notable were a fully raised nose and modified side-pods which were designed to improve stability, aerodynamics and the high-speed handling of the car.

Schumacher's British teammate, Eddie Irvine, who failed to finish 10 times last season, said he wanted greater reliability and more testing opportunities. "I don't want another year like the last and that car was the most difficult I have ever had to work with," he said.

While Ferrari may have to

wait another year to attack the title, Williams' Jacques Villeneuve believes this season the crown will be his. "I am going in with the championship in mind," said the man who was second to Damon Hill, his former teammate, last season. "There is only one spot better I can go and I will have to work hard to make sure I get that spot."

Of HJJ's chances this term with Arrows, the Canadian said: "I don't think the whole package is ready to win - although I'm sure they could surprise us once in a while."

Norwich take Rocastle on loan

Football

Norwich City have signed the former England international David Rocastle on a month's loan from Chelsea.

The 29-year-old midfielder, who has been languishing in the reserves at Stamford Bridge this season, is expected to go straight into the Canaries side for Saturday's trip to Southend, with Andy Johnson struggling with a knee injury.

Norwich's manager, Mike Walker, has also gone to give a trial to the Everton reserve defender Neil Moore, while the striker

Ade Akinbiyi has completed his £250,000 move to Second Division Gillingham after agreeing personal terms and passing a medical yesterday.

Bournemouth have called in administrators after a winding-up order over unpaid tax was delayed in the High Court. The Second Division club have debts of £2.5m and owe £231,000 in PAYE, but the court appearance in Liverpool was postponed after the club asked for more time.

Major shareholder Norman Hayward, one of only two remaining directors following the resignation of five others since

Christmas, has put in £250,000 in a bid to save the club.

The acting chairman, Brian Willis, admitted a Salisbury-based firm of accountants had been called in to act as administrators. He said: "We have to restructure the club's finances in the next few weeks and make ourselves more attractive to potential investors."

"We have spoken to three or four people who have shown interest in buying the club or investing in it, but we don't want to sell players."

"The directors have resigned because any new investor would want to bring in his own men."

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football
7.30 unless stated (subject to pitch inspection)
COCA-COLA CUP QUARTER-FINALS
Boca v Wimbledon (7.45)
Middlebrough v Liverpool (7.45)
AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD
NORTHWEST SECTION FIRST ROUND
Swansea v Wycombe
TELEVISION
SCOTTISH CUP
Brechin v Livingston
Falkirk v St Mirren
Postponed: Clydebank v St Johnstone
THIRD DIVISION
Preston v Rotherham
Preston v Rotherham
Preston v Rotherham
Preston v Rotherham
FOURTH DIVISION
Preston v Rotherham
Preston v Rotherham
Preston v Rotherham
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FOURTH DIVISION
Preston v Rotherham
Preston v Rotherham
Preston v Rotherham
Preston v Rotherham

TODAY'S NUMBER

10.2m

The BBC's live coverage of last Sunday's FA Cup third-round tie between Manchester United and Tottenham was watched by an average of 10.2m viewers. In comparison, last year's televised Chelsea-Newcastle tie drew 8.5m viewers.

POOL FORECAST

FA Cup
1. Aston Villa v Newcastle
2. Blackpool v Coventry
3. Leeds v Leicester
4. Liverpool v West Ham
5. Middlesbrough v Southampton
6. North Forest v Chelsea
7. Sheffield Wednesday v Everton
8. Sunderland v Arsenal
9. Walsley v Luton
10. Walsley v Luton
11. Walsley v Luton
12. Walsley v Luton
13. Walsley v Luton
14. Walsley v Luton
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18. Walsley v Luton
19. Walsley v Luton
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FOOTBALL

The Football Association inquiry into last night's riot at Arsenal City will take place at Ashton Gate on 22 January. City players have been charged with failing to control spectators after the crowd violence sparked off by Peter Beardsley's injury-time equaliser for Bristol Rovers on 15 December. Brian Horton, the Huddersfield manager, has moved to ease a goalkeeper injury crisis by signing Middlesbrough's Alan Miller on a month's loan. Tony Norman damaged a hamstring during Saturday's FA Cup tie at Queen's Park Rangers and joined the first-choice keeper Steve Francis on the sidelines. Derby County are giving a trial to Martin Robinson, a striker from the Swedish club Desjardins IF.

Football
1. Aston Villa v Newcastle
2. Blackpool v Coventry
3. Leeds v Leicester
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5. Middlesbrough v Southampton
6. North Forest v Chelsea
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16. Walsley v Luton
17. Walsley v Luton
18. Walsley v Luton
19. Walsley v Luton
20. Walsley v Luton

GOAL

Ladbrokes have out the odds on the 1997 USPGA tour money list in its full year as a professional from 25-1 to 8-1 following heavy support. Neil Farnham is 4-1 to win a Major this year. **ARROW CHALLENGE** (betting on the last leg of the tour) - Neil Farnham is 4-1 to win a Major this year. **ARROW CHALLENGE** (betting on the last leg of the tour) - Neil Farnham is 4-1 to win a Major this year. **ARROW CHALLENGE** (betting on the last leg of the tour) - Neil Farnham is 4-1 to win a Major this year.

First Division
1. Arsenal v Southampton
2. Blackburn v Aston
3. Cambridge Utd v Exeter
4. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
5. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
6. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
7. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
8. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
9. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
10. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
11. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
12. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
13. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
14. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
15. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
16. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
17. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
18. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
19. Sheffield Utd v Exeter
20. Sheffield Utd v Exeter

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AROUND THE RESORTS

AROUND THE RESORTS
Resort Comment Area open Last open Lift open Forecast
ANDORRA
Areny de Noya: Hard-packed low snow 95% 5.1 80 130 Variable
Pal: Powder on upper slopes 100% 5.1 80 130 Clouds
AUSTRIA
Kitzbühel: Hard base, suffering in day 55% 4.1 5 20 Fog/sun
Naxos: North-facing superb 100% 4.1 5 20 Mist/sun
Neustift: Gusty snow, high levels 100% 24.12 5 20 Light/major
CANADA
Lake Louise: All types of powder/snow 100% 6.1 110 165 Clear/sun
Jasper: Powder/snow 100% 4.1 60 180 Light/sun
FRANCE
Alpe d'Huez: New snow up top 65% 5.1 115 260 Unsettled
Argentière: Best up top 95% 5.1 120 140 Unsettled
Auron: Powder up top 100% 5.1 120 140 Variable
ITALY
Livigno: Fresh snow all levels 100% 5.1 140 230 Overcast
Livigno: Abundance of fresh snow 100% 6.1 105 230 Clearing
Maceranga: Good coverage all levels 100% 5.1 70 280 Clearing
SWITZERLAND
Verbier: Many patches powder 100% 3.1 50 110 Cloud/snow
Zermatt: Some glacial patches 100% 4.1 5 100 Light/sun
UNITED STATES
Squaw Valley: Powder/snow 100% 6.1 200 200 Cloud/sun
Squaw Valley: Powder/snow 100% 6.1 125 315 Clouds
UNITED STATES
Squaw Valley: Powder/snow 100% 6.1 200 200 Cloud/sun
Squaw Valley: Powder/snow 100% 6.1 125 315 Clouds

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Workshop to Augusta
Golfer Lee Westwood aims to make 1997 his year, page 19

sport

Advancing horse
Ferrari unveil their new car but is it a winner? Page 21

Robson poised to snatch Nadal

Football
ALAN NIXON

The roll call of exotic names at Middlesbrough is to be swelled by Miguel Angel Nadal, the Spanish international defender having been tempted to leave Barcelona for £2.2m.

After weeks of negotiations the 30-year-old Nadal, nicknamed "The Beast" will fly into Teesside this week to discuss personal terms which include a £1m a year salary. The Boro manager, Bryan Robson, is willing to invest heavily in the centre-back, despite problems

with foreign imports like the Brazilian Emerson.

Robson, however, will have to sell the club to Nadal as he had his heart set on joining Manchester United until they dropped their interest when he became ineligible for the final stages of the Champions' League.

Leeds United are also looking in Spain for a new recruit. Their manager, George Graham, spent the weekend in Madrid attempting to finalise a move for the striker Haim Revivo. The Celta Vigo forward would cost around £2.5m.

Gerry Francis yesterday un-

veiled Ramon Vega as Tottenham's "Tony Adams". The 25-year-old Swiss defender completed his £3.7m move from the Italian side Cagliari six months after rejecting Francis' advances in favour of a move to Serie A.

Francis refused to give up on Vega - born in Switzerland of Spanish parents - and with the Sardinian side suffering a cash crisis, he moved in again.

Vega's arrival on a four-and-a-half year contract follows the captures of Steffen Iversen and John Seales, taking the Spurs manager's spending in barely a month to more than £9m.

"I've been criticised for not going out and spending money but the last month has shown we're ambitious and we want to do it," said Francis, who is convinced the versatile Vega will prove as successful at White Hart Lane as Adams has been at Highbury.

"I see Ramon as a Tony Adams type, a leader on the field, and I'm certain he is captaincy material," he said. "His experience in Italy means he has learned a great deal and with him in the side we have a number of options at the back."

"With Ramon we've got somebody who is very enthusi-

astic and wants to do well and win things, just as I do."

The Aston Villa midfielder Sasa Curcic has done an about-turn following his weekend outburst and apologised to his manager, Brian Little.

Villa's record signing was threatening to quit the club, unhappy at being out of the first team. The 24-year-old Serb described his decision to leave Bolton in a £4m move in mid-August as "the biggest mistake of my life". However, Curcic has faced a letter of regret to Little and is now hoping to find a "constructive and positive way forward".

His apology could now put him in the frame for Saturday's home game with Newcastle after an eight-match absence.

"I have received a faxed letter from Sasa apologising for his words," Little said. "He apologised for the distress he has caused and also apologised to the chairman, supporters and the club. It looks as though he realises that he did something wrong."

Dean Holdsworth has been given time off by Wimbledon to sort out his private life. The £5m-rated striker has been the subject of lurid allegations by two teenage girls.

"Dean's family is more important than football," the Wimbledon manager, Joe Kinnear, said. "When I spoke to him it was clear his mind was in turmoil. I have told him to take all the time he needs."

Wimbledon play Bolton in the Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final at Burnden Park tonight.

The Southampton manager, Greville Souness, is set to escape disciplinary action for his confrontation with the referee Graham Poll after his side's FA Cup exit at Reading. Souness felt the game should not have been played, but Poll has not reported him to the FA.

Forest in disarray as Hill departs

JON CULLEY

Nottingham Forest can expect a backlash from fans at Saturday's home match with Chelsea after the rejection of a takeover bid left the cash-starved Premiership club in turmoil.

As disillusioned supporters accused shareholders of putting personal gain before the club's interests, the renewed uncertainty led yesterday to the resignation of Forest's general manager, Alan Hill, who is to rejoin his former boss, Frank Clark, as assistant manager at Manchester City.

One of 111 shareholders who voted to accept a takeover offer from Sandy Anderson at Monday's extraordinary general meeting, Hill reached his decision after the Anderson consortium failed by 31 votes to secure the 75 per cent majority needed for their bid to succeed.

The verdict will leave the relegation-threatened club without transfer funds for another month and the 79 shareholders whose votes blocked Anderson's plans had to run the gamut of angry supporters as they left the meeting. They can brace themselves for a further reaction on Saturday from fans who suspect them of seeking more money for their £1 shares.

Alternative bids offer an immediate cash-in value of up to £24,000 per share. Anderson, whose proposal offered no instant windfall, accused shareholders of "wanting money we felt should go into the club to go in their pockets instead."

But Peter Blackburn, who has emerged as a spokesman for the "no" group, last night denied the charge. "That was not the motive. What we want is the best possible deal for the club and for the shareholders to retain a major say in the running of the club. We did not feel the terms of Anderson's bid offered this. We also felt the £1.5m his group proposed to pay was a steal when we believe a flotation could value the club at £60m."

The favourite to win control now is a consortium organised by the former Tottenham chairman, Irving Scholar, and a Nottingham author, Phil Soar, which has the financial support of the owner of Saracens rugby club, Nigel Wray.

Hill, meanwhile, said that dissatisfaction with his new role - he had been assistant manager under Clark - and failure to gain assurances over his future were factors in his decision to leave.

"General manager sounded to me like a title given to somebody awaiting the sack and I don't think I deserved that indignity," he said.

Hill said yesterday he had formed the impression Pearce did not want him - but Pearce reacted with surprise to this. "I did not think I had given that impression. To lose Alan is a real blow," he said. Nigel Cleugh, currently on loan at Forest from Manchester City, is now in line to assist Pearce.



Emily Drumm celebrates catching the England captain in a testimonial match in Auckland yesterday with team-mates (from left) Sir Richard Hadlee, Allan Border, Merv Hughes and the successful bowler, rugby union player Ofisa Tonu'u. For Michael Atherton (right), that long walk back to the pavilion just gets longer and longer

Atherton caught out by safe hands of Ms Drumm

Cricket

Caught by a woman off the bowling of a rugby player. Mike Atherton will probably joke about it one day, but sympathy from two of the world's leading women players was little consolation after becoming the butt of dressing-room humour here yesterday, writes Mark Baldwin from Auckland.

England's struggling captain had planned a few runs and a lot of fun when he volunteered to play in a benefit match for the New Zealand Test bowler, Danny Morrison. He made 10, but did not look too happy after being caught in the deep by Emily Drumm, the only woman

playing in the match between the All Stars and the Dream Team at Auckland Warriors' Rugby League stadium.

"I can't remember it," Atherton said after being caught in the deep by Ms Drumm, a regular member of New Zealand's Test side who played in the World Cup final defeat by England at Lord's three years ago. Yesterday, she almost dropped the chance to make an even bigger name for herself - but held on to the catch at long-off at the second attempt off the bowling of Ofisa Tonu'u.

"It's a nice honour to catch out Mike Atherton," the 22-year-old remarked pitifully. "But I misjudged the ball and nearly wore it in the glove." All-rounder Emily, whose eight brothers and sisters were among a crowd of 3,000, also picked up three wickets with her medium pace bowl-

ing - including that of England's vice-captain Nasser Hussain - but it was Atherton who earned her sympathy. "I sort of feel sorry for him," she said. "He hasn't been the happiest chap out there and I haven't seen him smiling too much, but he's probably got a lot on his mind at the moment. I suppose it was unlucky the catch went to me. It wouldn't have mattered if it had been someone else."

Atherton also received welcome support from Barbara Daniels, the vice-captain of England's women's team and the executive director of the Women's Cricket Association. "On her day, Emily is one of the best women's players in the world," Daniels said. "She is a powerful stroke-maker and a more than useful swing bowler and

has a good pair of hands - and I think she's played quite a bit of cricket against men's sides."

Atherton sportingly agreed to support Morrison, his former Lancashire team-mate, and took along five of his colleagues for the 20-overs-a-side match, watched by a big television audience as well as a noisy crowd, which was played under floodlights on an artificial pitch.

The England women's captain, Karen Smithies, who has been a critic of Atherton's leadership of her team's male counterparts, said: "Today's events are good for us because it shows to people that women can play cricket, but it is a double-edged sword because we only get this exposure on the back of the men."

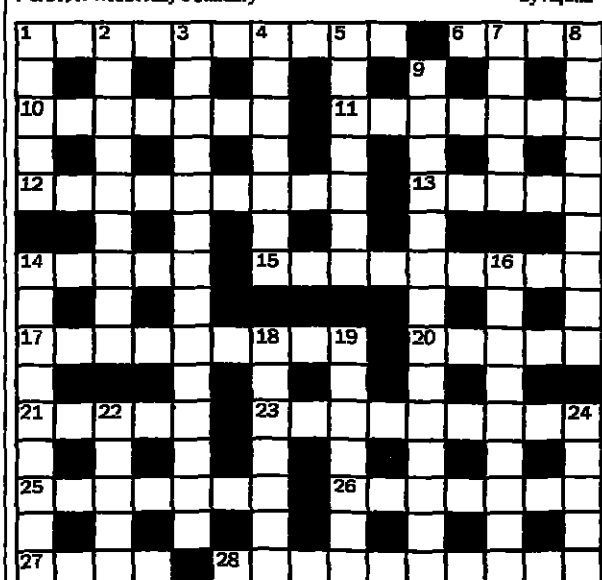
Australia lose again, page 20

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3190, Wednesday 8 January

By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution



ALWAYS BOUGABIE
COTTONS IN GIRE
S O C U I O
DEMOCRAT LUSTRE
F E R A T I O N
RANG TONITON
A T V T E U
ABUDDABI ALSO
A T I H C
O T I O S E Y O U T H F U L
I S G
W O T E S A I D H O R S E M
S K L U T O
R E S P E C I A L R E S E N T

- ACROSS**
- Dora sleeps rough — she is spotted in the jungle (10)
 - Home fixture for City (4)
 - Wild idea to enter him in medley-race (7)
 - Game marshal concerned with the country (7)
 - Playing dead by agreement (9)
 - Leaflet from place near Harrow, reportedly (5)
 - Short stop for a butterfly (5)
 - Play patience? (9)
 - Cliff's epic price revision (9)
 - Contests of rare champions (5)
 - Piece of Virgil I adapted for Greek epic (5)

- DOWN**
- All there, detectives follow central clue (5)
 - Rifle-ammunition improved to the French standard (9)
 - Sue, for example, called name in acid-rain circles (8)
 - Spiny fish short of oxygen — force throws it out (7)

- Across**
- County, losing tail, joins a league — how bizarre (7)
 - With full expenses completely exhausted (3-2)
 - Wild blows shake army installation (9)
 - One half can be written as one in this formal piece (6)
 - Tropic island grain (9)
 - Mostly pleasant, a student's prank at university, taking on a country (9)
 - Pagan in unfinished Fielding novel (7)
 - Uttar demand to support former partner (7)
 - Finger most often crossed in libraries? (5)
 - Top player, at end of July, is off-colour (5)

Hull KR finances hit rock bottom

Dave Hadfield on the reasons why a great rugby league club has fallen on hard times

The red, red Robin will be sob, sob, sobbin' today at the news that the club that was rugby league's high-flyer has come tumbling to earth with a sickening thump.

The directors of Hull Kingston Rovers yesterday revealed that they will apply in the High Court in Leeds next Monday for the club to be put into the hands of the administrators.

If that application is successful, the financial consultants Coopers and Lybrand will take over the running of the club in an effort to reduce a debt nearing the £1m mark. The Robins have been bobbin' deeper into the red for years.

This week's announcement is a grievous indignity for a club which, little more than a decade ago, was the most powerful in the land. During their great years between the late 70s and the mid-80s, Rovers won the First Division championship three times, the Premiership twice and the Regal Trophy, as well as going to Wembley three times, returning once with the Challenge Cup.

Humberside was the centre of the rugby league universe and



Happy days: Hull Kingston Rovers take on their great Humberside rivals Hull at their old Craven Park ground in 1985

if Hull KR, lacking some of the glamour of their neighbours, Hull, were less admired, they were — with players like Len Casey, Chris Burton and David Watkinson in their side — more feared.

Along with their local rivals, Rovers pioneered the recruitment of overseas players, with the likes of Gary Prohm and Mark Broadhurst from New Zealand and John Dorahy from Australia illuminating sides coached for an astonishing 14 years by Roger Millward.

Along with Hull, Rovers fuelled a steady rise in the support for the game and one demon-

stration of their fiscal muscle came when they shattered the world transfer record by signing George Fairbairn from Wigan for £72,500 in 1980.

Hull KR's decline since those heady days has been along all fronts, with relegation in 1989 coinciding with the supposedly life-saving wrench of leaving their Craven Park ground.

Like several other clubs, Rovers have discovered that selling up the hereditary acres for housing or supermarkets, rarely solves any underlying malaise, and their move to a new Craven Park has been a particular failure.

Hull KR have always been the club of the eastern half of the city, but those seeking out their current home have remarked that if it was any further east they would have a better chance of attracting support from the Netherlands.

The inaccessible and uninviting nature of their windswept new stadium has been a factor in Rovers' declining crowds. Even last season's promotion campaign from the depths of the Second Division saw average attendances still lagging below 1,700.

That upturn in their playing fortunes — spearheaded by an imported player recalling their old, adventurous policy, the Papua New Guinean Stanley Gene — has not restored them

to any of their old prosperity or stability. The gap between expenditure and income has left them losing more than £3,000 a week and has forced this week's course of action upon the board of directors.

While Rovers are merely the latest in a long list of clubs to admit to crippling financial problems, few have gone from a position of such strength to one of such weakness so quickly.

The writing on the wall has led some, like the club's former chairman and, along with Millward, its most distinguished ex-player, Phil Lowe, to propose a merger with bitter rivals Hull as the only way out. However, when Lowe actively urged that solution last year, he was virtually howled down by supporters who derided him as "a traitor".

The League's chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, faced with the embarrassing task of explaining how a game in receipt of £89m from Rupert Murdoch has three clubs — Bramley and Keighley are the others — in administration, said that Rovers had been too deep in debt to be rescued by the modest £135,000 they have so far received.

He too believes that a merger is the answer. "We have been saying for some time that two teams in that city chasing the same dream is not feasible," he said.

If the administrators cannot now achieve success in bringing the debts under control, the club faces the prospect of being wound up by its creditors.